

# **Horizon**

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART**

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**FACE OF MY PEOPLE**

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# COMMENT

THE great Dictator was growing old: for thirty years he had enforced his will on England, welding his people into as many shapes as a ship's steward can fold napkins. They had bled in wars, they had perished from overwork, they had performed like a well-drilled guard of honour, but in spite of their inexhaustible servility, their boundless capacity for suffering, they were not really happy; the birth rate went steadily down. Boredom suffused the mind of the great Dictator like a galloping dermatitis. On such days there was only one man whom he could bear to see, Lord Cavalcade, his *maître des plaisirs*.

The vizir entered in the uniform of an Admiral of the Blue. 'Noel, I gottem again.' 'Oh bad luck, sir!' 'It's the British people. — them! What can I do with 'em now?' Sir Noel also was a prey at times to ennui. I'll risk it, he thought. 'There is one experiment you have never made, sir. War, pestilence, famine, the eighty-hour week—all that's old stuff. Have you ever thought of Beauty?' 'Wodgermean?' 'This island once had a reputation for being beautiful—unspoilt scenery, eighteenth-century towns, lovely villages, Elizabethan manors—the clean fresh England of the Georgian aquatints.' 'Aquatints?' Sir Noel showed him one. 'Righto,' said the Dictator. 'I'll try anything once. Go ahead. What'll you need?' 'A handful of artists and absolute power for a year.' 'You have it Karblonsh.' The Dictator reflected. 'Arfamo, what about the International aspic? Will 'the Empire mind?' 'The Empire now consists of Libya, Abyssinia, the Beach-head, and, somewhere in the Indian Ocean, Rodd Island; I think we can take their consent for granted.' 'And the Great Powers?' 'They won't interfere. Too busy with the Tunnel.' The Tunnel, begun simultaneously from Duluth (Iowa) and Krasnoyarsk, was to provide a rocket route from North America to Siberia, through the centre of the earth itself, and so lessen the congestion in the air. 'A triumph of global engineering which will put the Tundra in direct communication with the Dust-Bowl,' said Sir Noel with his famous dead pan. But the Dictator was already napping.

Sir Noel at once got to work. He combed the mines and labour camps for a few surviving artists and men of taste; advisers and civil servants in the ill-starred governments of Butlin and Beveridge. With great secrecy in spite of cynical comment from the envious Chief of Police some Betjemanites were let out; long-haired, red-

eyed intractable prisoners who remembered Grigson and had marched with Piper. When the conditions of their release were explained to them a look of incredulous fanaticism filled their eyes. 'He' would be revenged at last!

That night the wireless gave out the terrible announcement: 'Are guilty: every house built since 1840, and all those who live in them. Commissioners will examine as from today any doubtful cases and all such houses will be destroyed within one calendar month. This order applies as well to all towns built since 1840, and only houses with proven æsthetic qualities, airports, and factories connected with essential services are exempt.' The television screen threw up the picture of a wild-eyed screaming announcer which the listeners, though it was a breach of regulations, were quick to eliminate. That week the Regional Commissioners began their work. Scarborough was spared because of its associations with the Sitwells, Wigan with Orwell, but the Commissioner for Southern England was an extreme Betjemanite who remembered the master's curse on Slough, the closing down of the Barnstaple-Lynmouth light railway, and other sacrileges. He refused to spare Reading for the sake of Wilde and Rimbaud, Bournemouth for Verlaine, or even Westward Ho for the sake of Kipling and Tarka the Otter. Middle-aged veterans of the Fourth Great War were called up from their second-hand businesses and preparatory schools; joyfully they saw their 'kites' again and briefing officers for the Southern Zone showed them their 'piece of cake,' 'Bournemouth! What a target!' Swindon—Woking—Southampton—Brighton—'Except for the Front'—and that slab of grimy South Wales smeared on the edge of Exmoor—sunny Ilfracombe! 'Wizard' they shouted, 'for England, Home and Beauty.'

In spite of such threats the British were unexpectedly stubborn and only a few obeyed the order to leave their homes and take up temporary quarters in luxury liners, mystery cruisers, and pre-1840 gaols and mental institutions in 'safe' areas like Bath, Clovelly, Burford and King's Lynn. The Corporation of Bournemouth made a pathetic appeal for their city 'so fond of music—so careful of the Chines'. Macaulay's praises saved a large part of Torquay, and London received a special privilege of keeping its buildings up to 1860. In the Tudor hotels, pubs and road-houses, half-timbered resorts for the half-plastered, false optimism



reigned. 'They won't do anything to us—besides the warming-pans are genuine.' A month later the Commissioners acted. Bombs fell day and night on Bournemouth and Brighton, Southampton and Slough, Reading and Woking, Ilfracombe, Paignton, Weston-super-Mare; avenue by avenue, terrace by terrace, grove by grove. The Dictator panted into the microphone: 'If you bastards aren't beautiful we're going to bomb you until you bloody well are.' The American papers almost forgot the Tunnel. 'Merry England gets a facial,' they screamed, and then fell to speculating, as before, on how the immense energy below the earth's crust could best be employed.

After a year's hard bombing all the post-1840 towns had disappeared from the map. Aldershot and Camberley were open heath, Southampton a small winter resort; the New Forest ponies grazed over Bournemouth, Slough was a haunt of the great crested grebe, Woking a sandy birch-forest, and the sea coast an unspoilt wilderness. The red deer roamed over Ilfracombe and the scholar-gypsy was seen again in Oxford. Country houses had now been deprived of their Victorian additions, and the landscape of England was revealed in all its planned untidiness as if it were an eighteenth-century nobleman's deer-park. 'I wonder if we shouldn't have gone back to Rufus,' said the Dictator. 'Why?' asked Lord Cavalcade. 'This is authentic enough. Except for the planes, the telegraph poles, the war memorials, the pylons, the arterial roads, the airports and the essential factories, we are back in Ackermann's England: this is our country as it was meant to be.' He was circling slowly round in the Dictator's helicopter. 'Look at that wide curving street with the pale green and cream Georgian houses and the fields beyond—that is a country town—it used to be 'town country' a year ago. And that village there with its warm church tower, and its golden manor—breath-taking! and those downs without a house on them—what a skyline!—and over there where those two old mussel-gatherers are walking—that used to be the Palace Pier! This is the country that Blake and Jane Austen loved, where Constable and Samuel Palmer painted, where Cobbett rode and Dr. Syntax ambled, an agricultural island with a few local industries—there is the lace factory at Tiverton. It's as lovely in this long May sunset as it has ever been.' 'All the same,' grumbled the Dictator, 'there's something wrong. It's the people.



—them.' 'Yes, you're right: it's the people.' The Chief of Police, the third occupant of the plane, was speaking. 'You forgot about them. What made Regency England, 1840 England, so beautiful? I will tell you. Its architecture represented its beliefs. It believed in itself and in its harmonious relation to nature: the population was neither large nor small, the ecology was correct. Our Georgian architecture, so graceful, so classical, so airy, was the last vision of humanism. And the nation was young: its beauty was in its power, in its hope, in its prospects, in its magnificent rôle as arbiter of the nineteenth century which lay ahead. What prospects have these people got? More than half of them are over fifty: in the casualties (though reduced of course to a minimum by precision bombing) another three million have perished. Those who survive believe in nothing except nicotine and alcohol. Of what use to them are town halls and churches? The architecture of a culture is the outward expression of its spiritual health.' 'You talk like a Betjemanite,' said the Dictator. 'Come down a little lower then.' The helicopter descended over the blistered ruins of Brighton. Crowds were bustling about like ants. Tiny posters could be seen: 'Acacia Avenue.' 'Ready soon.' 'Desirable residence.' 'Old Tudor Teas.' 'Nell Gwynne's cottage.' 'Balmoral.' 'Kosy Kar-wash Kafé.' 'Madame Desdemona, clairvoyante.' Mysterious bubbling noises came from the centre of the crowd. 'My God,' cried Cavalcade. 'They've got hold of a concrete-mixer.' A new hoarding faced them: 'Buy now'. 'Site for Bungalow Town.'

The Dictator was speechless. The helicopter returned to Downing Street. 'Blast the whole bloody lot,' Cavalcade felt for certain that his last moment had come. 'Still it was fun while it lasted,' he ventured. '—you,' replied his master. 'Three million lives—we can ill afford them,' remarked the Police Chief. 'Eddication—that's what them bastards need. Why in hell didn't you think of it, Admiral,' roared the Dictator, his face mottled with anger. 'You'd better go back to jug with the Betjemanites.' But a message was handed in. 'Terrible explosion of natural gas. Tunnel wrecked. Twelve million workers buried.' The Dictator smiled again. 'Never mind, Noel,' he grunted. 'It seems we all make mistakes.'

Lord Cavalcade backed out. Once safely in the passage he put on his cocked hat, took a quick look at himself in the glass, straightened up to his reflection, and saluted. His sword clattered as he marched briskly down the ceremonial stairs.

JOHN MACKWOOD

# SOME REFLECTIONS ON 'OBSCENITY'

WHAT is 'obscenity'? In common parlance it is generally held to imply something which arouses sexual desires together with a feeling of disgust. It would add to the usefulness of any definition to include the term sensual, since this would permit the inclusion of all prepubertal erotic phenomena together with the skin and internal organ-feeling tone that is essentially sensual as opposed to sensuous.

Naturally any mixed state of consciousness of attraction and repulsion involves conflict; and such a conflict may be present in the agent, the observer, or in both. But the account so far given is not an explanation and does not get us very far. Still less is it a definition; and it is noteworthy that there are no practical definitions of obscenity, so that English Statutory Law even fails to provide one, offenders being charged with 'indictable misdemeanour', without any clear explanation of what that implies. The generally accepted test in the Courts is based on that laid down by Chief Justice Cockburn in 1868, who defined it as a tendency 'to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences'. Imagine the Gilbertian confusion that could arise in skilful argument between Counsel as to which individuals had this depraved tendency!

Havelock Ellis in an Essay on 'Obscenity' recalls how Sir Archibald Bodkin, for many years Director of Public Prosecutions and a zealous prosecutor of 'obscenity', appeared as the Representative of Great Britain at an International Conference, which met at Geneva to discuss 'The Suppression of the Circulation and Traffic in Obscene Publications'. A Greek delegate suggested the desirability of first defining the meaning of the word 'obscene'. Sir Archibald objected, on the score that there was no such definition in English Law, and it was unanimously resolved, before proceeding further, that 'no definition was possible' of the matter which the Conference was called together to discuss.



The fact is that obscenity evades strictly legal definitions. It could certainly be said to lie within the province of Religious jurisdiction, but religious definition of the term would prove to be even more confusing for practical and scientific purposes because 'obscenity' is clearly a psychological concept. So far the word 'tendency' provides the most fruitful of possibilities in the matter under discussion, for tendencies are biological phenomena. Henri Bergson has pointed out in *Creative Evolution* that the deployment of evolutionary changes of Nature are sheaflike and open out into more and more divergent patterns. He warns us how we tend to limit significance, if we form our categories too strictly by the mere collection into groups of individuals possessing similar characteristics, and how much more fruitful it is to observe and categorize those individuals who *stress* certain characteristics shared by a larger group. For Bergson the primary biological dualism is that of Instinct *versus* Intelligence; and this point of view provides us with a psychobiological conflict in the making—something biologically *natural*. This conflict is the basis and essence of human cultural development.

Human nature has changed and progressed so far from its origins in the animal kingdom that its genes transmit tendencies which can no longer be accurately described as Instincts. Today we speak of instinctual impulses. These, few in number as observable phenomena at birth, quickly and steadily liberate new attitudes and tendencies that interact with increasing complexity and deliver into consciousness human character-traits and dispositions which develop with body-growth, emotional responses, and mental perception. Any traumata, whether physical, mental or emotional, that cause blocking or slowing down of any component of development in general, will cause some degree of dissociation or dislocation in the ego-development and will necessitate defence mechanisms which will cause later distortions and complexes of motor expression and behaviour.

To return to the meaning of 'obscenity'. Usually we are fairly safe to turn to literature for generally accepted significance of words; but if we try to get at the derivation of the word 'obscene' it is clear that the word 'scene' refers to the external organs of the special senses and especially that of sight. The prefix 'ob' has various meanings, and we are justified and accurate in translating it as 'facing', 'over-against' or even 'reversely'; and this

serves to bring out the idea of conflict and dualism. It connotes a sense of antithesis, of antinomy or dualism in which there may be *contraries*, but never *contradictions*. Contradiction is, strictly speaking, a metaphysical term which has no place in mature reasoning from experience, though it is an invariable phase of mental activity in the development of the child's mind.

This idea of conflict implies two different realities. The psychological reality is always one based on emotional feeling and is a consciousness of 'as if', so strong in all of us at some phase of life that its force is as compelling as that of the adult acceptance of the reality of 'as such'. Adult reality is the perceptual mental judgement arrived at through experience by a synthesized agreement between our emotions, our external world perceptions, and our intelligence which is active in relating the parts to each other and the whole. When there is a conflict between the inner unique, subjective world of individual feeling and the outer world that is shared by all, the results are divergent and complicated and fall mainly into two groups according to which reality is stressed; and in the absence of mental defect the intelligence is over-active in defence through noting similarities for the purpose of displacing the tension from a higher to a lower potential. For the purpose for which it is defensively employed the intelligence is perfectly effective and, consequently, contradiction is actively resented. Pascal brought out this conflict when he said that 'the heart has its reasons that the head reckons nothing of', and he is clearly stressing the emotional content. Dostoyevsky brought the idea of conflict much nearer to what we are discussing in the words of one of *The Brothers Karamazov*: 'What is beauty to the heart is obscenity to the mind; did you know that?' Here one senses that 'beauty' refers to a pleasurable conscious experience belonging to a time when it was legitimate and antecedent to the mental stricture which afterwards makes a critical judgement on that experience. And one is reminded of St. Paul's saying that 'to the pure all things are pure'—a thing he would hardly have been likely to have said before his 'revelation'.

What is the main tendency behind 'obscenity'? Every individual has the natural urge of curiosity. It is perhaps the chief factor responsible for learning and scientific exploration, as Aristotle recognized when he said: 'Therefore all men desire to know'. The world is and always has been attractive to certain



tendencies in our 'libido'. But if we agree that we are all curious we shall equally agree that curiosity is preceded by ignorance, and that true ignorance is synonymous with innocence. It has been stated that no properly educated girl of eighteen years could be innocent; but she may be virtuous. For both of these states of non-consciousness—ignorance and innocence—the teaching or enforced infliction of *new 'knowledge' at the wrong time*, or in an unacceptable manner, will cause what is presented to appear as contradiction. Further, owing to the necessity for the child to depend in an emotionally secure manner upon its upbringers this contradiction cannot be rejected. The result, in many cases, is that the child's *innocence* may be taken away; and, because it has no understanding of its internal tensions, these are experienced as feelings of guilt and disapproval when referred to persons and objects in the outer world.

When something *naturally* interesting, e.g. curiosity, is forcibly taken away or inhibited without the child's appreciating the reason, it may quell any overt manifestation of the interest but it does not stop the dynamic activity of the natural tendency below the level of ordinary consciousness. Whenever this dynamic tendency erupts into consciousness it is accompanied with anxiety which is immediately referred and felt in relation to the community and experienced as a sense of guilt. But worst of all, it checks the onward development of the natural interest or tendency and condemns it to immaturity, whilst the rest of the personality development continues as chronological age advances. Is such an *adult* one who has a tendency 'to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences', or is he one whose mind is open to be corrupted?

Everyone understands the implications of the 'smutty' story; the 'dirty' story, i.e. the *sexual* innuendo. If we include the sensual factor we can also understand the significance of the 'foul' or 'filthy' story, for we shall have included bodily organs with their functions—all of which sooner or later must to some extent come under the ban of cultural taboos. From the filthy story to the 'Ca-Ca' stage in the infant is not a far cry in memory, and Freud has traced back the meaning of 'filthy lucre' to obsessional interest in the bowel-functions. Most of us enjoy a 'really good story' because it has the saving grace of also being funny, and it (erotically) 'tickles' our fancy. Further, when such a story

evokes roars of laughter the teller feels almost a public benefactor, so little sense of individual responsibility do we feel in a group where all are identified by agreement with us. It would appear that spontaneous laughter, a sense of humour, was part of a natural compromise-mode of coming to terms with the taboos evolved in the course of cultural development. If the taboo forces us to give up most of the interest in some previously enjoyed innocent experiences it permits the gain of laughter to redress the balance, and something new has taken over from the past rather than anything been taken away; and whereas we had the earlier enjoyment all to ourselves, we get something we can share with others.

Laughter is surely something important in any comprehensive understanding of what is meant by 'obscenity'. What makes one 'heave' with disgust cannot make one want to laugh: and *vice versa*. If we get caught between two perceptual foci and ambivalently 'jam', there is tension with blushing—a tacit emotional admission and denial at one and the same time; but if none of these reactions occurs and there is true ignorance or innocence, the individual is merely *curious* to have the matter explained to him.

It was interesting—was it merely a coincidence?—that it was the Greek delegate who wished to have the term 'obscenity' defined. Greek civilization and culture are still strongly represented in our cultural patterns. Part of the fascination of Ancient Greek History is that it flowered so quickly and evenly, and exhibited such remarkable continuity. The basis of religious guilt upon which this culture rested is nowhere better portrayed than in the presentations of human conflicts and sufferings in the Tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles. Euripides changed Tragedy to Drama, since consciousness was expanding fast with increasing knowledge, and man began to be aware that he could do something toward his own deliverance, and that he was not absolutely forced to suffer under a malign fate. In his *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche complains bitterly that Euripides 'introduced the spectator onto the stage', where, before, there was no real audience but only a chorus-group waiting expectantly for the arrival of the god with whom it immediately identified itself. In Euripidean Drama, the spectator could to some extent critically observe the action and enjoy the spectacle, unless his complexes caused him to react too severely; especially so as he was made



aware by an oracular proem of what had happened and what was about to happen. It was left to Aristophanes to introduce bizarre incongruities into the same field of perception, and poke fun at Euripides in his New Attic Comedy in a manner that gave rise to laughter.

The Ancient Greeks were so biologically fused with Nature that their bodily shapes and functions were never a source of guilt to their minds; there was never anything shocking in anything that pertained to Nature, she was merely dangerous and they felt subservient to her until they won freedom through increased knowledge. It was precisely this fact of seeking only a *bodily* deliverance that led to their downfall; for when it was attained, they had no conscious future aim but to love their corporeal selves. When St. Paul preached in Athens, his criticism was that everywhere people flocked together 'only to hear and see some new thing', and when they did not understand and were not interested in what he said, they called him a babblers; the word they used was 'spermologos'. In crude slang today, the term would be 'verbal diarrhoea'—inferior all round to the Greek word. It is unlikely that the Ancient Greeks suffered from anxiety-states with psychosomatic symptoms, as we do today, for they had no guilt-sense about these symptoms and accepted them as a natural body-speech. Only 150 years divided the birth of Æschylus from the death of Aristophanes.

It seems as if we needed this priceless gift of laughter—the recognition of something funny in the incongruity of any situation—as a defensive displacement of conscious tensions from a higher to a lower potential to help us accept what is otherwise too great a strain. Humour develops toward a higher level and more toward a mental plane as the personality develops; but in every civilized community there must always be taboos, the breaking of which may constitute 'obscenity'. Even if it is well-nigh impossible to define this term accurately, we can say that it arises out of cultural progress and change. And if the exclusion of the 'obscene' is desirable from every point of view, it is important that it should be a natural and gradual process of development for, in the long run, the prude is a far greater offence than the lewd person. We might go so far as to define 'obscenity' as a perversion, though the converse is not necessarily true. The foundations of perversions, in otherwise normal people

without constitutional and temperamental defect, is nearly always the persistence of certain sensual or sexual tendencies, normal at some phase of life, after they have ceased to be socially acceptable. When these perversions are overtly manifested, or include other objects and persons, they become an offence to the rest of the community which has outgrown them, and which has *successfully* forgotten its own (literally) abandoned interests. Finally, when such perversions have no saving grace, especially that of laughter and humour, or some other cultural value, they may be 'obscene'.

In conclusion the following extract from a clinical case epitomizes most of the points that have been touched on:

Mrs. A—— B——. Married, aged 35. A case of Anxiety-Hysteria with an intense phobia of 'lice'. These insects represented in their finally condensed form all the fears she had ever suffered from, and which could be included under the heading of 'dirt'. Clinically, she was never at ease and feverishly searched for furniture mites—which she said she always found—whenever there was an access of anxiety or tension. She was intensely curious, but could never ask questions (during therapeutic sessions, she was always wanting to look round, but dared not); she seemed too often to come across salacious references in what she saw, read and heard; and she felt herself the victim of all the things she most disliked and dreaded. There were many traumata in her early life, but the most important was an incident that occurred between the ages of four and five, when her mother was in hospital and her spinster sister came to look after the household. One day the patient was coming up her area-steps, and as her head reached the level of the pavement she saw through the railings two dogs mounting each other a few feet away. She gazed at them with round-eyed wonder and absorption. Her prudish aunt caught sight of the scene from the window and rushed out shouting: 'You dirty little bitch!', grabbed her and hauled her down the steps into the cellar. The small child fought with the frenzy of fear and despair, and fainted in the cellar. As she came to, she screamed: 'I'll tell my Daddy when he comes home', whereupon her aunt seized the wood-chopper and, raising it above her head, threatened to 'cut off her head' if she did. The threat was efficacious, and the child locked up this experience within herself so that it became repressed.



There were innumerable reactions subsequent to this trauma, leading up finally to the phobia. She required more than two years' treatment to become really free. We need not go into details; but there was one curious repetitive habit she had of giving a little short laugh during the analytical sessions, and saying: 'Do you know what I am laughing at?' Naturally the psychotherapist had to confess ignorance and put the question back to her—but always with the same reply: 'No, I don't'. After nearly two years of treatment, the same question came up yet again, with the same response from the psychotherapist. On this occasion she said: 'Yes; I *do* know now'. On being asked if she felt inclined to give him the solution, she replied as follows: 'You remember those two dogs? Now I know what I was laughing at. The one that was on top was very worried, but he looked so silly, as though he were laughing with his tongue out.'

This should serve as a warning never to offer interpretations until the patient has further material on which to base a judgement. There is always the risk that our own minds may be more 'obscene' than those of the patients, and most psychotherapists will agree that they have been caught in this way before they have acquired experience.

Reflections of this nature go on to ideas about dealing with the problem, and with the other side of the problem—that of the deprivation suffered by the more mature members of the community when a too prudish censorship denies them easy access to works of culture that have a real value. And the question arises, How can psychology be expected to change the legal attitude?

As a fact, psychology has already effected a good deal in influencing the legal attitude to those who commit acts involving punishment under existing Statute Law. The Home Office is definitely concerned with the *mind* of the convicted offender, and with means for understanding more about the contributing factors of crime in general and treatment directed toward preventive recurrence of the offences. This side of the problem is not static and offenders (though it is by no means certain that the author or artist whose work has been banned, with or without additional punishment, stands equally to gain) may look forward to gradual change from the hard and fast attitude of the past. And there are increasing instances of Judges who express the hope and opinion that convicted prisoners should

receive treatment for offences that clearly involve psychogenically-motivated impulses. One big difficulty is that our laws are the outcome of the cultural demands of the common people, and we are a nation slow to alter our opinions; another difficulty is that Judges are appointed and paid (i.e. forced) to administer these laws or resign. And psychiatry is not yet in a position to be able to assess the individual before treatment with such a degree of accuracy that it can be tolerably certain of the total personality, or of cure, in any particular case; and the Judge naturally requires some evidence approximating to 'fact' to weigh against the fact of the offence. There will always be 'Bodkins' on the Bench, and prosecuting in the Courts, so long as the culture of the community continues to throw them up in considerable numbers; that is, until knowledge, as significance and understanding, is enlarged by suitable upbringing.

In regard to the members of the community who are deprived of legitimate enjoyment of cultural works, such as books, paintings, and sculpture, on the score of their being indecent, the underlying problem is the same. The thought occurs, Why has there never been a prosecution of indecent or obscene musical composition? Why are the waves of some spoken sounds held to be obscene whilst those of otherwise produced sounds are not considered to be so? Clearly, the only answer can be that it is due to the esoteric meanings in language and the written word. Pictorial calligraphy escapes the charge and approximates to the status of the Greek word 'Logos' when this held the same significance for 'language' and 'meaning'. It is obvious that the effect of cultural taboos has been at work to produce the present situation.

It should be a cause for curiosity why, in the creative arts, it is so widely felt that 'Holy water' should be contained in Holy bottles, or at any rate in 'pretty' bottles that long custom and convention has sanctified. Anything new, startling or 'uncouth' rouses all the innate hostility to the stranger which is termed *Xenophobia*, and which is so classically represented by our insular attitude that still tends to label all non-Nordic races as 'dagoes'; but quite forgets that the idea of the 'white' man is a Myth and that the Albino is a recessive freak, common to all species of animal and plant life. These end-results of rigid attitudes and character-traits have early and small beginnings, and it is there



that they must be tracked down, detected, and taken in hand. Cultural taboos are necessary for all civilized communities and are, in this sense, a 'good' thing; but one can have too much of anything, and the too persistent emphasis of any rigidity tends towards the fixed type. The limpet, indolent fellow, has remained true to type for over a hundred million years!

Paul Valéry, in his *Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci*, writes of the majority of people: 'They see through a dictionary rather than through the retinae, they come so ill to an object, so vaguely to knowledge and the pleasures and pains of sight that they have to invent *beautiful views*'. It may not be easy for us to follow Leonardo and make ourselves universal—*facil cosa e farsi universale*—but it should not be beyond the development of an average personality to ask that, in any field of perception, he does not enlarge some detail, make it stand out and, in total ignorance of the fact that he can do this only through the faculty of *identification* with the stressed particular, proceed to throw a brick at this unwelcome stranger and call him obscene. Such people need to realize that they are seeing themselves in a mirror. Then, like St. Paul, they may cease persecuting others for faults in themselves which they have projected onto their fellows.

Can psychology do anything to help alter this state of affairs and, if so, how? I think it can and in a manner that would, in time, act both in the interest of those punishable by law for psychologically determined offences and also in the interest of those who are denied free access to cultural works in any realm of the Arts. But, first, let us take a very brief historical glance of the psychological field. The credit for first seeing the obverse side of the medal in the motivations of human behaviour belongs almost entirely to Freud, who painstakingly evolved a highly polished and scientific instrument for curing psychogenically determined abnormal behaviour-patterns. Freud was able to prove his thesis by clinical results, and, by undoing and reversing all kinds of neurotic behaviour, he enabled the individual to emerge really free, and with a true alternative, to repeat his old pattern or to forget it and develop on to maturity. He incurred great hostility from the medical world and the laity, and was more or less a pariah during this phase of his life. His results have been repeated by a host of followers in many thousands

of cases. But one of the great arguments against psychoanalysis, and other forms of psychotherapy based upon Freud's original technique, is the time required for even the average case; and the attempt thus to deal with the problem and to cure the vast numbers needing such treatment has been likened to chasing an express train with an ox-wagon. Of course, psychological medicine could never rest content merely to deal with the emotionally distorted and neurotically dispositioned adults and leave the underlying productive conditions and causes to pile up a waiting-list at a rate higher than could be dealt with, short of training an impossible number of therapists. The knowledge gained from treating the individual was sorted and worked on and it was found that all the most important determining factors began to operate in the early developmental years. And if the adult could be cured, it should surely be possible to *prevent* the child from becoming handicapped in like manner? This has been found to be so, and to be practicable; and the numbers of children who have been rescued from some form of neurotic disposition already run into very large figures. The tragedy is that there are all too few suitable Clinics for this purpose.

The child's mind has a logic all of its own, and it is literal and concrete. J. Vendryes, in his book *Language*, brings out well the difference between the small child's language and that of the adult world around him. He writes: 'We have no right to consider a rational and abstract language, because it happens to be our own, as in any way superior to a mystical and concrete one. It is entirely a question of two different types of mentality, each of which may have its own merits. There is nothing to prove that, in the eyes of an inhabitant of Sirius, the civilized person's mentality does not represent degeneration.' This concrete mind of the child needs concrete and three-dimensional material with which to express its thoughts and feelings, and to make contact with the strange world outside itself in order to establish suitable object-relationships. Hence, play and toys are an all-important and serious business of early childhood, as any interested observer can see for himself. If this externalizing of the child's inner world proceeds satisfactorily, it does not matter that its verbal vocabulary lags behind, for this is entirely normal. One is on safe lines if, to use Jeremy Taylor's phrase, one 'is sure of the thing though not so sure of the argument'. The suitable words will come later



to fit the significance. The early childhood vocabulary of the body, its functions, and the fantasy-life become gradually transferred to, the concrete things it uses in its play, which is highly symbolical and magical; and as knowledge out of experience and words come in, some of the symbolism is lost into the 'unconscious'—and a process of mature growing-up is satisfactorily started.

It seems to follow naturally, if this early play is the instinctual and safe way of learning about life and reason, that play material should be the means of expressing the child's conflicts too; and that, if we could by this means get into the mind of the child—get *behind* the looking-glass—we should be able to see what the child sees and help him to see things directly, quite apart from the enormous advantage of also knowing what it is that is feared in its often apparently normal and secure environment. The problem of the 'p's' and the 'q's' should be in the course of comparatively simple solution for both child and upbringer. All this, too, has been done and proved to be practicable by *Play-therapy*. It is a delight to watch, for instance, young children of both sexes, suitably clad in macintoshes, squirting each other with hose-pipes, or 'making a world' in a tray of wet sand which they shape and people with all kinds of miniature everyday objects—intuitively, unerringly and symbolically stating their problems concretely for interpretation by the skilled therapist, if necessary and when the suitable time comes. But one wonders how many parents and grown-ups would be shocked or offended if they knew that the hose-pipes were symbolical streams of urine, and that the wet sand was their 'Ca-Ca'. Yet they give their children glitter-wax or plasticine to play with as being preferable to making mud-pies—so they fondly imagine.

It seems curious that, with all the contemplated outlay on the Health Services of the future, the development of the mind of the child—and all that this means for its capacity to function freely and to *enjoy* life—should not be taken more into account. The child seems to be the tail that, between the two stools of Health and Education, 'falls to ground'. The objection on the score of expense, or the problem of the training of enough skilled therapists, should hardly be seriously allowed to stand in the light of all our experience of war expansion in every conceivable branch of requirements. One would like to visualize—surely no

mere Utopian fantasy?—a school curriculum in which the normal play of the kindergarten stage was provided for and observed, and the earliest signs of something amiss detected. One would like to see an adequate number of Play-therapy Clinics to which these early cases went automatically, and any others that later on manifested signs of psychological and emotional problems. The time required for these early errors is very brief compared with what is needed for the end-results met with in adults. *Mens sana in corpore sano*; we are still too apt to think of health solely in terms of *physical* signs dependent on an organic pathology, regular work and hygienic surroundings. With the new slogan 'Rehabilitation' too many conjure up a picture of someone who is physically damaged. One very big advantage of a school psychiatric service, provided by the Education Authority free for all its pupils, would be the removal of parental Xenophobia, which so often prevents, even under existing conditions, a child from getting the treatment it needs; the parents would soon cease to feel affronted by the suggestion that *their* child needed treatment.

As true significance comes in, the early 'obscenity' tends to drop away into the realm of cultural prohibition. In the words of Emerson:

'Heartily know,  
When half-gods go,  
The gods arrive.'

This will also apply to prudish censorship of cultural contributions. The solution for all these difficulties is educational, not in the sense of the stuffing in of facts as a kind of knowledge, but of drawing out what is there by the steady deliverance into consciousness of an increasing significance. We should accept the Platonic standpoint that man knows 'without knowing that he knows', and we have today the advantage over the Socratic method that concrete play-therapy provides as an adjunct to education.







JOHN CRAXTON. Alderholt Mill, Dorset. 1944



# ENID STARKIE ECCENTRICS OF EIGHTEEN-THIRTY

## I. CARNIVAL

THE Revolution of 1830 left behind it a sensation of disappointment and disillusionment. The people had sacrificed so much and they were in no better position than they had been before. They had exchanged one king for another, but in doing so had only exchanged the tyranny of birth for that of money.

During the last years of the reign of Charles X there had been two factions in opposition to the King and favouring a revolution. On the one hand were those who wanted a republic and on the other were those who wished to put the Duke of Orleans, the son of Philippe Egalité, on the throne. Most of the youth and intelligentsia were on the side of the Republicans, but the Orleanists had Thiers, Guizot, Lafayette, Talleyrand and all the financial interests. They had the solid bourgeoisie behind them, but they had no soldiers. They contented themselves with drawing up their plans and then waited for events. It was the Republicans who fought in the streets, who manned the barricades and who won the victory. Ten thousand of them under Cavaignac completely routed the royal armies. In those days Paris was a maze of narrow streets, and these were very helpful for guerrilla warfare. No artillery could be brought up against them, and the insurgents used paving-stones, poured boiling water and threw furniture out of the windows on the troops, who were helpless in face of such assault. Fighting began on 27 July and lasted three days, 'Les Trois Glorieuses' they were called. On the 28th, Charles X's soldiers were utterly defeated, and what was left of the armies went over to the revolutionaries. On the 29th, the Louvre was attacked. The *Suisses*, terrified of a repetition of the massacres of August 1792, fled in disorder. Some of the royal armies followed suit and others went over to the insurgents. At the end of the day the tricolour flag floated over every public building in Paris.

When Charles X heard of the disaster, he retired to Rambouillet and abdicated in favour of his grandson. But this availed him nothing; the boy king, the regent and the government were swept away. But, as so often happens, the winning insurgents were completely taken by surprise by the swiftness of their success and they had no plans ready to meet this emergency. Then the Orleanists stepped in with their already prepared schemes and got them accepted. The Duke put a bunch of tricolour ribbons in his hat and holding the tricolour flag in his hand—the tricolour stood for revolution—marched to the *Hôtel de Ville*. Thiers proposed him as king. He was at first greeted with shouts of 'A bas les Bourbons!', then he appeared on the balcony with Lafayette at his side—this was a stroke of genius—and embraced him before the crowd. That carried the day, for Lafayette was the idol of the country and his participation in the American revolution made of him, in the eyes of the mob, the champion of liberty. Seeing him with the Duke of Orleans the crowd thought that all was well and accepted the king that was proposed.

Reaction, however, soon set in when the country realized that it had been cheated of the fruits of the revolution which it had won. The early years of the reign of Louis Philippe were socially and politically restless. The young, who had fought at the barricades, when they saw the spoils of victory falling to someone who had done nothing to win them, refused to settle down quietly under the new government and organized revolt amongst the working classes. During 1831 and 1832 there were strikes in Paris and in most of the large towns which were like minor revolutions, and they had to be suppressed with great severity, even with bloodshed, for the authorities were afraid of a repetition of 1830.

The general state of unrest was expressed socially in the disillusionment, cynicism and love of feverish dissipation which characterized the early years of the July Monarchy. It was as if all barriers and restraints had been swept away with the barricades of 1830 and that there was a sudden bankruptcy of all previous values. There have been few periods in French history when eccentricity and delirious pleasure were more apparent than in the years from 1830 to 1835, few periods when frivolity took on so despairing a colouring. It was in the eighteen-thirties, and not in Baudelaire's day, that the artificial paradises were the fashion,

when drugs were resorted to as an escape from the vanity of life. It was very different from the light-hearted frivolity of the Second Empire. The young used to profess the most utter cynicism and disillusionment. Their favourite reading was the Marquis de Sade—his works had an astonishing vogue during the early years of the reign of Louis Philippe—and they claimed to admire cruelty and immorality. They used to repeat, to show their cynicism, a phrase culled from a popular novel of the day, a phrase which would have delighted Baudelaire as a young man: 'J'ai le cœur usé comme l'escalier d'une fille de joie'. In their lives they sought out horror, vice and hectic pleasure. It was almost as if Fate conspired to give them what they sought, and the terrible cholera epidemic of 1832 with its grim contrast to the mad gaiety of the carnival of that year, was melodramatic in its aptness. The tenseness of the atmosphere at the time gave a feverish and unnatural excitement to the festivities of that year. Never had the carnival been more brilliant or more wild.

For weeks Paris had been waiting with the menace of the plague hanging over it and the frivolous members of society, finding the suspense unendurable, took advantage of the carnival to drown their anxiety in uproarious pleasure, and they danced with desperate feverishness as if they thought that they might defy death itself with the extravagance of their dissipation.

The weather, too, that year was gay and care-free, and spring came earlier than usual with almond blossom of unusual beauty and lilac buds as early as March.

Then suddenly, in the middle of the carnival, just as if it had flown into the city hidden under the wings of spring, the plague swept across the Channel and alighted on Paris. A harlequin felt an icy hand suddenly clutch at his legs, creep up his body, paralysing his limbs. He tore off his mask in agony and the onlookers saw that his face had already turned purple. Next, the whole company of pierrots were struck down by the cholera as they danced. They were carried from the ballroom to the *Hôtel Dieu*, thence immediately to the *Morgue*, and they were buried in their fancy dress with the powder and paint not washed from their faces.

These were the first victims of the plague, and thousands were to follow. The cholera raged from March until May, and carried off, in Paris alone, twenty thousand patients. The horror of the



scourge took many years to fade from the memory of the city, and its obsession is found in the writings of the day.

In Fontaney's *Journal Intime* we have a vivid day-to-day account of the progress and ravages of the plague, and it reflects clearly a sensitive man's reactions to the tragedy, a man who was not able, as were so many of his contemporaries, to stupefy himself with pleasure and dissipation.

During the months of the cholera the hearses used to stand in the streets, like hackney-cabs waiting for hire, and the drivers would go at frequent intervals to ring at the doors of the houses to find out whether there were any dead to bury. They had so many engagements that they were obliged to keep to a strict timetable. Even so there were not sufficient hearses in Paris for all that were needed. Sometimes one saw two or three coffins in the same hearse; sometimes farm carts were seen, and they passed with the coffins piled up like logs of wood; sometimes again furniture vans were used, and they were crammed to the roof with dead.

A favourite pastime, in those days, was to go to the various cemeteries to see the burials. Enormous trenches were dug that went through old graves and even across streets. Old coffins were dug up to make room for the new and the bones were cast aside, bones with flesh still hanging to them and even whole bodies in which decomposition had hardly set in. These were thrown aside and afterwards flung in on top of the new coffins. The pits were very close together and the undertakers were there, with their foot-rules, measuring the space with great precision, to see that not an inch was wasted. Fontaney describes how, when he was watching a burial, a cough was heard coming from one of the coffins and, when the onlookers insisted on its being opened, it was discovered that the patient was still alive, and he was taken back to hospital.

Another popular pastime, which shows the prevailing love of the macabre, was to go to the *Hôtel Dieu* to watch the patients dying of the plague. 'I went to fetch Mérimée,' writes Fontaney, 'and we went along to the *Hôtel Dieu*. We visited all the wards. They all looked astonished and terrified, their eyes deeply sunk in their sockets and ringed with black. I saw one old woman who had turned completely purple, with her lips drawn back and showing her teeth. As we went in we saw them carrying down a corpse covered with a sheet. They lay them out in the

cellars, on the ground in white sheets. You would imagine they were monks.'

From the *Hôtel Dieu* they went to a party at Hugo's house. Liszt was there; he sat down to the piano and played the funeral march from Beethoven's sonata. Fontaney thought what a magnificent picture might be painted showing the cholera victims marching, to the sound of that music, through Notre Dame, draped in their white shrouds at night.

Fontaney returned home through the silent moonlit streets, and it was as if Paris were deserted for scarcely anyone would venture out after dusk. The people imagined that the plague was more virulent at night. The pest-stricken city lay in total darkness, but now and then a red lantern could be seen, not the red light of a brothel but that of a temporary first-aid post. From time to time dark shadows passed in the streets with lanterns, sinister figures carrying coffins.

'Oh! que ces nuits en temps de peste sont effrayantes et solennelles!' writes Fontaney.

In the early eighteen-thirties every kind of eccentricity flourished, and the delight of being absurd in public places, of trying to 'épater le bourgeois', was very typical of smart social behaviour. Then extravagant conduct began to be accepted as the hall-mark of independence, intelligence and breeding. Well known are the peculiarities of behaviour of Marquis de Saint Cricq, of whom Villemessant writes in his *Mémoires*. He tells us that one day the Marquis, clad in a workman's smock and wooden sabots, marched at the head of a caravan of empty cabs which he had hired for the purpose along the boulevard until he reached the Café Anglais; then he halted the caravan outside and ordered it to wait while he went in to drink and play cards with his friends. Then there was the Englishman, Lord Henry Seymour—not that he was wholly English and he had never been to England, for he was the son, the illegitimate son, of the Marchioness of Hertford by Casimir de Montrond, the friend of Talleyrand. He was a taciturn and somewhat gloomy young man, always exquisitely arrogant and impeccably dressed. The Anglomania of the period, his title and his superb arrogance gave him his popularity. He had a large fortune, which he spent mostly on sport. He was the founder of the Jockey Club, the most exclusive club in Paris. It was he who made fashionable the

cruel practical joke which is one of the characteristic features of the period and was considered the distinguishing quality of the nobleman. The Dandies, many of whom had spent their early youth in England, had adopted the well-bred bad manners of the English upper classes, manners made up of arrogance, lack of grace, of consideration and awareness of others—particularly of those not of their own social class, whom they treated with hauteur. Lord Henry Seymour passed into the French tradition as the typical English aristocrat. His cruel practical jokes, his sardonic wit, his physical prowess and his lavish expenditure were the model of the later Dandies of the Baudelaire generation. Not that all the exploits attributed to him were in reality his; they were mostly those of Charles La Battut who had as much right to be called English as had Lord Henry Seymour.

Charles La Battut was the illegitimate son of an English chemist of great wealth. This chemist, unable to marry his mistress, paid a large sum to an impoverished Breton nobleman to recognize the child as his own and to give him his name. On the death of the chemist, Charles La Battut inherited a large fortune which he proceeded to squander in Paris, living extravagantly. He was a member of the Jockey Club and he aimed at earning a notorious reputation at a time when the Marquis de Saint Cricq and Lord Henry Seymour made notoriety fashionable. Many are the fantastic stories which are related of his exploits. Unfortunately, however wild were the extravagances of La Battut, he was never given credit for them. For some unknown reason the crowds always shrieked: 'Vive Lord Seymour! Vive Lord Arsouille!' <sup>1</sup>

The turbulent and tempestuous carnival of 1832 gave La Battut his first real notoriety. On the last Sunday before Lent his large open carriage appeared on the boulevards in the midst of the crowds of merry-makers in their fancy-dresses. It was preceded by two outriders, looking like picadors and sounding a loud fanfare on immense hunting-horns wound round their bodies. The coachmen and the footmen were decked in coloured favours and the carriage was thronged with young men and women in fancy-dress standing up and flinging onto the mob below confetti and handfuls of coins which were scrambled for. When evening fell, the carriage was lit up by torches and everywhere it passed the crowds shrieked: 'Vive Lord Seymour! Vive Milord Arsouille!'

<sup>1</sup> Arsouille = debauchee



Many others followed suit. Some of the exploits were genuinely amusing. Paris chuckled for many weeks over the trick played on the authorities by the fashionable journalist, Nestor Roqueplan, on the night of a ball given by the King, Louis-Philippe, as befitted a monarch who prided himself on his democratic principles, gave this ball at the *Hôtel de Ville* and he invited to it members of all classes of society. When Roqueplan arrived in the vicinity of the *Hôtel de Ville* so great was the throng of carriages that he soon realized that he would not reach the ballroom until early morning, for the carriages were proceeding at a snail's pace. He did not intend to remain five or six hours sitting in his cab. He returned home, sent for a stretcher and two stretcher-bearers. He lay down on the stretcher dressed for the ball, covered himself with the blanket so that nothing could be seen except the tip of his nose. Then he ordered the bearers to carry him to the *Hôtel Dieu*, the hospital standing in the square opposite the *Hôtel de Ville*. As soon as he reached the vicinity of the town hall he got involved in the slow-moving traffic and the stretcher-bearers were told that they could proceed no further. But, at their cry, 'A dying man for the *Hôtel Dieu*', a way was made for them through the crowd of carriages and in this manner Roqueplan arrived in the square. He skipped off his stretcher, throwing aside his blanket, then, to the amazement of the on-lookers, ran up the steps of the *Hôtel de Ville* and arrived, immaculately dressed and in good time.

Dancing was the passion of the age—as it is the passion of all ages of confusion and stress. The wilder and more extravagant the dance, the better the public was pleased. The thirties of the nineteenth century saw the birth of the 'valse éperdue' and the 'galop infernal'. A German visitor to Paris describes this galop. 'The rhythm of the music gains in speed and the gestures of the dancers become more passionate, more urgent and more insistent. The whole dance changes in character and becomes "une course effrénée" in which the couples stampede down the whole length of the hall. The attitude and expression of the dancers show "un embrasement si voluptueux", as the rout grows wilder and wilder, that it gives the impression of a witches' sabbath.

'The rhythm of the music became still faster while the women, their faces red from exertion, their mouths half open, their hair in wild disarray, are dragged panting along, rather than upheld

by their legs, until finally they fall, with the crashing of the last chord, on to the nearest chair.

The most characteristic dance of the period was the *Cancan*, whose indecencies would startle a modern dance hall. The *Cancan* was first danced in Paris in 1831 at a low tavern haunted by soldiers and sailors. It was said to have been brought to France from Algeria by troops returning on leave. Its chief characteristics seem to have been the obscenity and lasciviousness of the gestures and movements. This quality was increased if—as was frequently the case in the places where it was danced—the participants were intoxicated.

The dance was first introduced into 'le monde' at the notorious and hysterical carnival of 1832. With Roger de Beauvoir and Le Vicomte d'Aulnès—whose pen-name was Alton Shée—Charles La Battut danced it at the ball at *Les Variétés* on the Monday before Lent. Alton Shée has given an account of this exploit in his memoirs, *Les Mémoires du Vicomte d'Aulnès*.

In the midst of the ball a flood of intoxicated young men, arm in arm, hurled themselves down the temporary staircase which led from the grand circle to the orchestra stalls. They swept through the crowds, dragging along everything that stood in their way. Then the chain broke up and the disguised and masked young men scattered through the hall, seizing the girls away from their partners by main force and dancing wildly with them, making bawdy jokes and brazen advances to them. The men partners were outraged and some of the more respectable members of the company were disgusted at this flaunting of a total lack of decency and decorum, but the women, who were the victims of the assault, were almost delirious with excitement and enjoyment.

The ideal young woman had greatly changed since the early days of the Romantic movement, and it was no longer melancholy and ethereal Elvire who was the fashion. It was now the day of 'la lionne'. 'La lionne' did not wear flowing draperies like her elder sister; she wore corduroy trousers like George Sand, smoked cigars or even a pipe, and she was a heavy drinker. Madame d'Agoult, the mistress of Liszt and mother of Cosima Wagner, who wrote under the pen-name of Daniel Stern, describes her in her memoirs as 'cavalière, chasseresse, bottes éperonnées, fusil à l'épaule, cigare à la bouche, verre en main, toute impatience et vacarme'.

Finally, to the horror of some of the public, La Battut began to dance the *Cancan*. The police made efforts to stop the dance, but they could do nothing in the face of the torrent of popular acclamation, and they had perforce to allow it to sweep along to its victorious conclusion.

The following morning La Battut received a visit from the manager of *Les Variétés* who assured him that the police would not molest him again and begged him to return that evening to his ball and, by dancing once more the *Cancan*, to renew the enormous popularity he had given to his theatre the previous night.

That evening, Shrove Tuesday, La Battut, Alton Shée and Roger de Beauvoir, before returning to *Les Variétés*, went first to the ball at the *Odéon*, where they smuggled in a naked dancer. She slipped in past the doorkeeper draped in the folds of a voluminous shawl, well supported and hidden by a group of young men. Once inside the theatre, like Salome she discarded her veils—this did not take long since there was only one—and appeared naked, except for a feather boa and long black gloves. Then she began to dance the *Cancan*. The effect was instantaneous. Young men crowded round her from all sides shouting, 'Vive Vénus! Vive Vénus!'

The police who were on duty rushed forward waving their batons excitedly and tried to put an end to this shameful 'outrage aux mœurs', but they were driven back and they had to beat a hasty retreat beneath the blows that rained on them from all sides. Then the dancer, taking advantage of the confusion, draped herself once more in her shawl and disappeared with her escort.

If one wished to discover one single individual symbolical of this period, able to embody in his own person all its main characteristics, one could choose no better manifestation than Philippe Musard. He gathered in himself all the frenzied quality of the years between 1830 and 1840. It was he who conceived the 'valse éperdue' and the 'galop infernal'. He was the conductor at the *Théâtre des Variétés* during the carnival of 1832, and it was the febrile atmosphere of that year which started his vogue. Indeed, he can be considered as one of the most typical figures of the day.

Philippe Musard—or as he was always called Napoléon Musard—was a little man of somewhat undistinguished appearance—or was so until he stood before his orchestra. He was generally



shabby, with ill-kept hair, dressed almost invariably in an ill-fitting black suit buttoned up to his neck and showing only a thin line of white collar. He looked like a page boy, somewhat like the fat boy in the *Pickwick Papers*. But this grotesque and burlesque-looking little man managed to enjoy the most fantastic popularity in his day. During the years of his vogue no Christmas was complete without the windows of the confectioners' shops being filled with little *Musards* made of chocolate, marzipan or ginger-bread.

It was generally believed that he was possessed by the Devil, that he had made a pact with the Prince of Darkness, and that this alone could explain how he came to conceive the 'galop infernal'. That galop, Balzac said, needed the help of Satan. According to contemporary stories, he could summon devils from Hell.

'Ce Musard infernal,  
C'est Satan qui conduit le bal.'

There is little available material dealing with the life of Musard. The only reliable information is that contained in an article by Arthur Pougin published in *L'Intermédiaire des Chercheurs et des Curieux* in June 1911.

The date of his birth is unknown, but he died at Auteuil on 31 March 1859 and he was said to be about sixty-six at the time.

He is alleged to have begun his musical career by playing the horn at low working-class 'hops' like those at which the *Cancon* was first danced, the *Bœuf Rouge* at Belleville or *L'Ile d'Amour* at Romainville. It is said that even in those days he was already composing quadrilles.

Under the *Restauration* he migrated to England to make his fortune, and it was in London that he first reached fame by organizing the court balls and leading the orchestra. In England he was not satisfied with the part of mere bandsman; he had the ambition of becoming a writer of classical music and composed only serious works.

Just after the Revolution of 1830 he returned to Paris and published some of his serious music, several string quartets and three parts of his treatise on musical composition, *Nouvelle Méthode de Composition Musicale*. But the path of the serious musician is hard and progress is slow. He was to reach fame by another road. The notorious carnival of 1832 gave him his chance.

He was largely responsible for the success of the balls at the *Variétés*, and so a man with capital conceived the plan of organizing public concerts and dances in the *Champs Elysées* and he entrusted the direction of them to Musard. Musard, however, eventually quarrelled with his employer, but he was by then sufficiently well known to start on his own, first at the *Jardin Turc* on the *Boulevard du Temple*. Then he migrated to the *Salle Saint-Honoré* and finally, when he had amassed sufficient capital to embark on more ambitious schemes, he built his own dance hall which he opened in 1836. It enjoyed immediate success and became the vogue of fashionable Paris.

Musard was now one of the most important people in Paris and, as well as running his own dance hall, he was directing the balls at the *Opéra Comique*. So important a public figure was he that the false rumour of his death in 1837 created general consternation and a feeling of universal grief.

'Who has not seen Musard,' writes the reporter to the *Ménestrel*, 'at the balls at the *Opera* has not really lived. There, standing on the Venetian bridge in the light of a thousand candles, the *Maestro* is his true self. It is no longer a man, not even a musician, but a God who is conducting the orchestra. Sometimes he rolls his eyes round like balls of fire; sometimes he gazes from right to left with serenity and calm. His bow, which never grows weary, seems to draw each note—from the majestic semibreve to the rapid and tripping crotchets—and to lead it right to the centre of the listener's ear. With one single glance he can hypnotize those around him, with his bow draw back those who have wandered, hold back those ready to escape, warn those whose attention flags, and rouse those who have lagged behind. In the *adagios* and the *andantes* his face expresses dignity and contemplation. In the *allegros*, on the contrary, his glance seems to dart lightning, his nerves are taut and his whole body seems to be the incarnation of that intellectual conception, perpetual motion. Then he is no longer merely beating time. He is hacking it out with repeated blows, with his feet, his hands, with his elbows, with his knees, with his whole body.

Sometimes he stands rigid, gazing at the ceiling, looking down at his public, from the height of his majesty, scratches his head, pats his ribs; sometimes he sits down and wearily passes his hand across his brow. Sometimes the tip of his bow seems to

hover over the note just as it is dying away, helping it, as it were, in its death; at other times the bow seems to pick the note up off the floor and to drag it back to the music desk.'

All these movements were in time with the music which the orchestra was playing. Whatever he was doing, his baton or his bow was not a mere baton or bow but was a magician's wand.

He had a very individual way of leading the orchestra, says Pougin, of communicating to it his satanic quality. With his band, composed of twenty-four first and second violins, with a suitable number of violas and 'cellos, twelve trombones and cornets, he was able to achieve many striking effects which have not been without influence on the development of even serious music. He is said to have been the first to have tried the experiment of giving the tune to the brass wind, not being content to use it solely for the inner parts of the orchestration. In another branch also he left his mark and he may certainly be considered the father, grandfather or great-grandfather of modern jazz. In order to enhance the power of his music he used effects which were not in themselves musical; the sound of breaking wood, of repercussion or non-resonant surfaces, of pistol shots being fired in time with the music. These effects originated by chance. During one of his quadrilles the chair on which a member of his orchestra was seated suddenly broke and the sound of the cracking wood happened to harmonize with the beat of the music. The public thought that this was an intentional effect, that it was a new stunt of Musard's, and they were ecstatic in their appreciation. As soon as the dance was over he was carried in triumph round the dance hall. This dance was afterwards called 'le galop de la chaise cassée', and it remained one of its creator's most outstanding achievements. Later he varied the effect by firing off pistol shots at regular intervals, by banging his desk with his baton in time with the music and many other similar stunts.

By this time Musard had abandoned original composition and his music consisted largely of a *pot-pourri* of popular tunes of the day, or tags from well-known popular operas, but what was original was his manner of treating the material which he borrowed from others.

His most famous creations were quadrilles rather than galops, and these were pageants more than mere dances. He invented



fancy-dress quadrilles with subjects taken from French history—from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This was a time when fancy-dress parties were the rage and the public did not mind what it spent to reconstruct the local colour of the past. He had quadrilles of foreign countries—English, Spanish, Arab—and many other kinds of quadrilles. He created the *Paris Students Quadrille*, the *Pirates Quadrille* and the *Quadrille de la Reine des Fous*. There were others called *The Whirlwind*, *The Thunderstorm* and so forth.

The most famous of all his quadrilles was the *Quadrille des Huguenots*, described by Delphine de Girardin in her *Lettres Parisiennes*. 'The *Quadrille des Huguenots* is a wonderful spectacle; nothing more fantastic can be imagined. The lights in the hall fade away and are replaced by a reddish glow to simulate the flames of the fires. It is a strange sight to see all the happy faces, all this gaiety against the macabre background. Then all these noisy ghosts, these demons of joy and madness, begin to move in long columns, they dash along in torrents, they turn and twist, sweeping backwards and forwards; the couples crowd together, surge on and back, without ceasing, never stopping, and the tocsin tolls, and the tum-tum of the drums rolls. The orchestra plays on, it hammers out the beat, growing louder and more insistent, and not allowing the dancers time to pause or to breathe; the volley of guns rings out at regular intervals; one hears cries, groans. It is indeed civil war; it is indeed massacre. The illusion is perfect.'

Musard's immense success with the balls at *Les Variétés* opened for him the doors of the Opera. This was a great honour and a revolutionary change. Up to that time no fancy-dress balls had ever been permitted at the Opera, they were considered too vulgar. The only mark of festivity had been the masks worn by the ladies. What was called the 'débraillé' of the period, 'l'orgie Musard', had been stemmed by the gates of the Opera. In 1836, when Musard entered the Opera it was as if the Barbarians had broken into a sacred temple. But the Opera had to yield to Musard, for everyone was dancing at his balls while those at the Opera were deserted. Mira, the director of these balls, had tried every kind of device—dignified devices—to make them more popular and to compete with the excitements elsewhere, but in vain. The taste of the public had been blunted,

it had grown so accustomed to 'l'orgie Musard' that it could no longer taste any less highly spiced fare. Mira then entreated the governing body of the Opera to grant him permission to give a fancy-dress ball and to employ Musard. This was granted, but on the day preceeding that on which the ball was to be held, the authorities, seized with panic, rescinded the permission. Mira would not consider himself beaten, and he continued to advertise his ball and to sell tickets for it. The whole day of the ball was spent in wrangling with the governing body, which finally yielded, but only after seven o'clock in the evening, under pressure from the subscribers who threatened to batter down the gates of the Opera if they were deprived of their fancy-dress ball. The authorities gave way and the ball took place. The Opera is a State theatre and the following day the authorities were fined ten thousand francs—four hundred pounds in those days—but it is said that the fine was never collected.

It was at this first ball at the Opera that Musard, in one of his quadrilles, fired off a small trench mortar, and this caused a sensation, greater even than the sensation created by the broken chair. The smell of gunpowder seemed to intoxicate the dancers, so that they shouted, they stampeded and finally, seizing hold of Musard, they bore him in triumph down the hall.

Delphine de Girardin, in *Lettres Parisiennes*, prints two letters written to her by friends describing the events of the ball from opposite standpoints. 'I regret very much,' wrote the first correspondent, 'that your attack of influenza prevented you from going yesterday night to the Musard ball at the Opera. Nothing could give you an adequate conception of what it was like. There were six thousand people present in the hall and two thousand were refused admission at the door. All the boxes were taken and even those of the King and the Duke of Orleans were invaded by the mob who had nowhere else to go. The costumes were most picturesque; the dances lovely and most passionate. Musard was carried in triumph on the shoulders of six of the handsomest men round the hall, while the whole company loudly acclaimed him, cheering vociferously. Musard's face was glowing with happiness. He is certainly 'roi des ribauds'.

The second letter gives the converse point of view. 'You were quite right not to go to the *Bal Musard* yesterday night at the Opera House. There was the most appalling crush imaginable.

It is difficult to imagine how people can enjoy such pleasures. There were many battles and we were in considerable danger. In the galop a young man slipped and fell and the whole 'rout' passed over his prostrate body. He was picked up afterwards in a most shocking condition. As far as I personally was concerned the tails of my coat were ripped off my back. I did not write sooner to give you the details of this mad ball because I thought it better that it should not be widely discussed.'

In the meantime Musard went on his triumphal course and Delphine de Girardin, writing the following year, said: 'Paris is dancing! Paris is jigging! Paris is enjoying itself in every possible way. Everyone is hurrying as hard as possible for Ash Wednesday will soon be upon us. Every quarter of Paris is in an uproar. The *Faubourg Saint-Honoré* is jigging! The *Faubourg Saint-Germain* is not content merely to jig, it is reeling! "Il tourne, il roule, il se rue, il se précipite, il s'abîme, il tourbillonne, il fond comme une avalanche!" It sweeps round you like a monsoon. It is hell let loose! It is Bedlam on the spree! It is Mazeppa on his mad horse! It is Leonora carried away by her lover, through the forests, through the deserts, over the rocks, stopping only to die! It is a nightmare, a witches' sabbath! The *Galop Musard* is a terrible pleasure! The fancy-dress balls at the *Salle Saint-Honoré* are this year as fashionable as last year.'

Musard's vogue lasted ten years, then his popularity began to wane and he was never heard of again. By 1842, when Paris had become serious and respectable, his success had vanished. Then, instead of using his gains to bolster up his waning popularity, he quietly retired and lived in Auteuil in bourgeois peace in comfort on his savings until his death in 1859.

(To be concluded)

ANNA KAVAN

## FACE OF MY PEOPLE

BEFORE they took over the big house and turned it into a psychiatric hospital, the room must have been somebody's boudoir. It was upstairs, quite a small room, with a painted ceiling of cupids and flowers and doves, the walls divided by



plaster mouldings to simulate pillars and wreaths, and the panels between the mouldings sky blue. It was a frivolous little room. The name Dr. Pope looked like a mistake on the door and so did the furniture, which was not at all frivolous but ugly and utilitarian, the big office desk, the rather ominous high, hard thing that was neither a bed nor a couch.

Dr. Pope did not look at all frivolous either. He was about forty, tall, straight, muscular, with a large, impersonal, hairless, tidy face, rather alarmingly alert and determined looking. He did not look in the least like a holy father, or, for that matter, like any sort of father. If one thought of him in terms of the family he was more like an efficient and intolerant elder brother who would have no patience with the weaknesses of younger siblings.

Dr. Pope came into his room after lunch, walking fast as he always did, and shut the door after him. He did not look at the painted ceiling or out of the open window through which came sunshine and the pleasant rustle of trees. Although the day was warm he wore a thick dark double-breasted suit and did not seem hot in it. He sat down at once at the desk.

There was a pile of coloured folders in front of him. He took the top folder from the pile and opened it and began reading the typed case notes inside. He read carefully, with the easy concentration of an untroubled singlemindedness. Occasionally, if any point required consideration, he looked up from the page and stared reflectively at the blue wall over the desk where he had fastened with drawing pins a number of tables and charts. These pauses for reflexion never lasted more than a few seconds; he made his decisions quickly and they were final. He went on steadily reading, holding his fountain pen and sometimes making a note on the typescript in firm, small, legible handwriting.

Presently there was a knock and he called out, 'Come in.'

'Will you sign this pass, please, for Sergeant Hunter?' a nurse said, coming up to the desk.

She put a yellow slip on the desk and the doctor said, 'Oh, yes', and signed it impatiently and she picked it up and put a little sheaf of hand-written pages in its place and he, starting to read through these new papers with the impatience gone from his manner, said, 'Ah, the ward reports,' in a different voice that sounded interested and eager.

The nurse stood looking over his shoulder at the writing, most of which was her own.

'Excellent. Excellent', Dr. Pope said after a while. He glanced up at the waiting nurse and smiled at her. She was his best nurse, he had trained her himself in his own methods, and the result was entirely satisfactory. She was an invaluable and trustworthy assistant who understood what he was trying to do, approved of his technique, and co-operated intelligently. 'Really excellent work,' he repeated, smiling.

She smiled back and for a moment the identical look of gratification on the two faces gave them a curious resemblance to one another, almost as if they were near relatives, although they were not really alike at all.

'Yes', she said. 'We're certainly getting results now. The general morale in the wards has improved enormously.' Then her face became serious again and she said, 'If only we could get ward six into line'.

The smile simultaneously disappeared from the doctor's face and a look that was more characteristic appeared there; a look of impatience and irritation. He turned the pages in front of him and re-read one of them and the irritated expression became fixed.

'Yes, I see. Ward six again. I suppose it's that fellow Williams making a nuisance of himself as usual.'

'It's impossible to do anything with him.' The nurse's cool voice contained annoyance behind its coolness. 'He's a bad type, I'm afraid. Obstructive and stubborn. Unfortunately some of the youngsters and the less stable men are apt to be influenced by his talk. He's always stirring up discontent in the ward.'

'These confounded trouble-makers are a menace to our whole work,' Dr. Pope said. 'Rebellious undesirables. I think friend Williams will have to be got rid of.' He pulled a scribbling pad across the desk and wrote the name Williams on it, pressing more heavily on the pen than he usually did so that the strokes of the letters came very black. He underlined the name with deliberation and drew a circle round it and pushed the pad back to its place and asked in a brisker tone:

'Anyone else in six giving trouble?'

'I've been rather worried about Kling the last day or two.'

'Kling? What's he been up to?'

'He seems very depressed, doctor.'

'You think his condition's deteriorating?'

'Well, he seems to be getting more depersonalized and generally inaccessible. There's no knowing what's in his head. It's not the language difficulty, either: his English is perfectly good. But he's hardly spoken a word since that day he was put in the gardening squad and got so upset.'

'Oh, yes; the gardening incident. Odd getting such a violent reaction there. It should give one a lead if there were time to go into it. But there isn't, of course. That's the worst of dealing with large numbers of patients as we are.' A shade of regret on the doctor's face faded out as he said to the nurse still standing beside him:

'You see far more of Kling than I do. What's your own opinion of him?'

'I think, personally, that he's got something on his mind. Something he won't talk about.'

'Make him talk, then. That's your job.'

'I've tried, of course. But it's no good. Perhaps he's afraid to talk. He's shut himself up like an oyster.'

'Oysters can be opened,' the doctor said. He twisted his chair round and smiled directly up at the good nurse he had trained. He was very pleased with her and with himself. In spite of troublesome individuals like Williams and Kling the work of the hospital was going extremely well. 'Provided, naturally, that one has the right implement with which to open them.'

He got up and stood with his back to the window which, to be in keeping with the room's decoration, should have had satin curtains but instead was framed in dusty blackout material. He had his hands in his trouser pockets and he was still smiling as he went on:

'We might try a little forcible opening on oyster Kling.'

The nurse nodded and made a sound of agreement and prepared to go, holding the signed pass in her hand.

'Lovely day, isn't it?' she remarked on her way, in order not to end the interview too abruptly.

Dr. Pope glanced into the sunshine and turned his back on it again.

'I'll be glad when the summer's over,' he said. 'Everyone's efficiency level drops in this sort of weather. Give me the cold days when we're all really keen and on our toes.'

The nurse went out and shut the door quietly.



The doctor swung round again in his energetic fashion and opened the window as wide as it would go, looking out over grassy grounds dark with evergreens. On a hard tennis court to the right a circle of patients in shorts clumsily and apathetically threw a football about and he watched them just long enough to observe the bored slackness of their instructor's stance and to note automatically that the man was due for a reprimand. Then he went back to his desk under the smiling loves.

As if he were somehow aware of the doctor's censorious eye, the instructor outside just then straightened up and shouted with perfunctory disgust, 'You there, Kling, or whatever your name is; wake up, for Christ's sake, can't you?'

The man who had not been ready when the ball was thrown to him, who had, in fact, altogether forgotten why he was supposed to be standing there on the hot reddish plane marked with arbitrary white lines, looked first at the instructor before bending down to the ball which had bounced off his leg and was slowly spinning on the gritty surface in front of him. He picked up the big ball and held it in both hands as though he did not know what to do with it, as though he could conceive of no possible connection between himself and this hard spherical object. Then, after a moment, he tossed it towards the man standing next to him in the ring, not more than two yards away, and at once forgot it again and nothing remained of the incident in his mind except the uneasy resentment that always came now when anyone called out to him.

For many months he had been called Kling, that being the first syllable and not the whole of his name, which was too difficult for these tongues trained in a different pronunciation. To start with, he had not minded the abbreviation, had even felt pleased because, like a nickname, it seemed to admit him to comradeship with the others. But now, for a long time, he had resented it. They've taken everything from me, even my name, he thought sometimes when the sullen misery settled on him. By 'they' he did not mean the men of another race with whom he shared sleeping room and food and daily routine, or any particular individuals, but just the impersonal machine that had caught and mauled him and dragged him away from the two small lakes and the mountains where his home was, far off to this flat country across the sea.

And then there was that other reason why the sound of the short syllable was disturbing.

The game, if it could be called that, came to an end and the patients slowly dispersed. There was a little free time left before tea. Some of the men walked back to the hospital, others lighted cigarettes and stood talking in groups, several lay full length on the grass or dawdled where ilexes spread heavy mats of shade.

Kling sat down by himself on the top of a little bank. He was young, very big and broad, very well built if you didn't mind that depth of chest, dark, his hair wiry like a black dog's, arms muscled for labour, his eyes only slightly decentred. He did not look ill at all, he looked enormously strong, only his movements were all rather stiff and slow, there was a marked unnatural rigidity about the upper part of his torso because of the lately healed wound and because of that heavy thing he carried inside him.

The bank was in full sunshine. Kling sat there sweating, dark stains spreading on his singlet under the arms, sharp grasses pricking his powerful, bare, hairy legs, his breast stony feeling, waiting for time to pass. He was not consciously waiting. His apathy was so profound that it was not far removed from unconsciousness. A breeze blew and the tall grass rippled gently but he did not know. He did not know that the sun shone. His head was bent and the only movements about him were his slow breaths and the slowly widening stains on the singlet. His chest was hot and wet and gloom ached in the rocky weight the black stone weighed under his breastbone, and his big blackish eyes, dilated with gloom, stared straight ahead, only blinking when the sun-dazzle hurt, and sweat stood in the deep horizontal lines on his forehead.

While he sat there a row of patients with gardening tools, spades, rakes, hoes, on their shoulders, came near. They walked in single file in charge of a man walking alongside, himself in hospital clothes, but with stripes on his sleeve. Kling watched them coming. All of him that still lived, resentment, gloom, misery, and all his clouded confusion, slowly tightened towards alarm. He could see the polished edges of spades shining and he shuddered, all his consciousness gathering into fear because of the danger signals coming towards him across the grass. As he watched, his breathing quickened to heave his chest

up and down, and, as the gardening squad reached the foot of the bank, he made a clumsy scramble and stood up.

Standing, he heard the clink of metal, and saw a shiny surface flash in the sun. The next moment he was running; stumbling stiffly, grappling the weight inside him, running from the men with the spades.

He heard the *Kling!* of his name being shouted, and again a second clattering *kling!* and running heard the spade kling-clink on the stone, he seemed to be holding it now, grasping the handle that slipped painfully in his wet hands, levering the blade under the huge ugly stone and straining finally as another frantic *kling!* came from the spade, and the toppling, heavy, leaden bulk of the stone fell and the old, mutilated face was hidden beneath, and Kling, stopping at the door of ward six where he had run, choking with strangled breath, while two men passing gazed at him in surprise, felt the dead mass of stone crushing his own breast.

He went into the ward and lay down on his bed and closed his eyes against the drops of sweat which trickled into the ends of his eyes. Then for a time there was nothing but the soreness of breath struggling against the stone.

This was what he had known a long while, ever since the truck had been blown thirty feet down into the ravine and he had seen the falling stone and felt it strike, felt it smash bone, tearing through muscle, sinew and vein to lodge itself immovably in his breast. Ever since then the stone had been there inside him, and at first it had seemed a small stone, just a dead spot, a sort of numbness under the breastbone. He had told the M.O. about it and the M.O. had laughed, saying there was no stone or possibility of a stone, and after that he had not spoken of it again; never once. But from the start he had been very uneasy, oppressed by the stone and by the heaviness that could come from it suddenly to drive away laughter and talk. He had tried not to think of the stone, but it had grown heavier and heavier until he could not think of anything else, until it crushed out everything else, and he could only carry it by making a very great effort. That was not so bad really, because with the weight of the stone crushing him he was nothing, and that was not painful or frightening, it was just a waiting and that was nothing as well. But sometimes, perhaps at the moment of going to sleep, the



dead weight lifted a little and then there were all the uncovered faces, the stone and the digging, and the old man would come back.

And so he lay very still on the bed, waiting for the deadness to overlay him, lying there in the knowledge that if the dead-weight of the stone lifted to let him breathe the old man would come.

Strange how it was always this one who came and never one of the others.

The stone weight was lifting now and Kling, who had dozed a little while after his breath had stopped struggling, woke suddenly, frightened by the return of the bloody-faced man lying in brown leaves with hairs growing out of his nostrils and a torn shirt fluttering.

That was his father who had lain dead in the room beside the Blue Lake. No, not that man. When he thought of his home he couldn't see any faces, only the jagged line of the mountains like broken egg-shell against the sky; and the two lakes, the Blue Lake and the lake shaped like a harp. That, and sometimes the inn with the acid wine of the district greenish in thick glasses, the swarming trout in the small tank on the wall, crowded sleek fish bodies slithering past the glass. But no faces ever. The stone blocked out all the home faces.

When he thought of the war it was always the digging he thought of because, seeing him so strong and used to work with a spade, they had put him on that job from the beginning; and then there were faces, wrecked or fearful or quiet or obscene faces, far too many of them; how he had laboured and toiled till his saliva ran sour, desperate to hide the faces away from the brutal light.

How many faces had he covered with earth and stones? There surely were thousands; and always thousands more waiting; and he all the time digging demented, always the compulsive urge in him like a frenzy, to hide the ruined faces away. And sometimes he remembered that officer in charge of the burying party, the one who joked and sang all the time, he must have been a bit cracked really, boozed or something; but they had dug and shovelled till their hands were raw blistered and hardly noticed the pain because of his Hey! Hi! Ho! and the jolly loud voice that he had.

There had been no singing that afternoon in the gully where the corpses, boys' and old men's among them, sprawled in the withered oak leaves between the rocks. Only haste then and the bitter taste in the mouth and the aching lungs, hacking the stony ground that was hard like iron to the weak bite of the spade, and the sky grey and muggy and flat and quiet. In the end someone had shouted and the others all started running back to the truck; and he had run too, and just then he had seen the old man lying flat on his back with blood congealing all down one side of his shattered face and the dry leaves gummed and blackening in the blood.

Kling was looking now at this object that the stone had rolled aside to reveal. There was no stone weighting him any more as he watched the object, feeling the bed shake under him as he shook and the muscles twitching in his forearms and thighs.

Then watching the object, while his heart pounded, he saw the hairs sprouting in his father's nostrils as he lay dead on the wooden bed that was like a wagon without wheels, he saw a movement detach itself from this man in the gully, or perhaps it was the torn shirt which flapped in the wind, only there was no wind, and he did not stop to investigate but, knowing only the obsessional urge to hide at all costs that which ought not to be exposed to the level light, hoisted his spade and shoved and battered and fought the top heavy rock until he heard a grinding crash and knew the torn face bashed out of sight, shapeless—smashed and hidden under the stone: and was it the same stone that burst his own chest and sank its black, dead heaviness in his heart?

The weight fell again now so that there was no more pain or fright and the bed did not shake; there was only the waiting that was nothingness really, and the men in blue talking and moving about the ward.

That was all that he knew, sweat slowly drying as he lay on the bed, and the old man mercifully buried by the stone. The others took no notice of Kling nor he of them, and he heard their talk and did not know that he heard until a woman's voice cut through sharp, 'Williams, and the rest of you, why are you hanging about in the ward?' He turned his head then to the nurse who had just come in, she was speaking to him, too, 'Kling, you're to go to Dr. Pope after tea. You'd better get up and make yourself decent,' and he saw her flat, cold eyes linger on him as she went out of the door.

'Get up and make yourself decent,' the man called Williams said. 'That's a way to talk to a fellow who's sick.'

Kling said nothing but looked up at him, waiting.

'To hell with them,' Williams said. 'To hell with the whole set-up. Bloody racket to get sick men back into the army. Cannon fodder, that's all they care about. Taking advantage of poor mugs like us. Pep talks. Pills to pep you up. Dope to make you talk. Putting chaps to sleep and giving them electric shocks and Christ knows what. Lot of bloody guinea pigs, that's what we are. Bloody, isn't it?'

Kling was staring at him with blank eyes.

'Look at Kling here,' Williams said. 'Any fool can see he's as sick as hell. Why can't they leave him in peace? Why should he go back into their bloody army? This isn't his country anyway. Why should he fight for it?'

From the far reaches of his non-being Kling looked at the faces round him. They were all looking at him but they had no meaning. Williams had no meaning any more than the others. But he heard Williams go on.

'Damned Gestapo methods. Spying and snooping around listening to talk. Bitches of nurses. Why the hell do we stand for it?'

A bell was ringing and the patients started to move out of the ward. Kling, staring up, saw the meaningless shapes of their faces receding from him. He looked at Williams who was still there and Williams looked back at him, smiling, and said, 'Coming to tea, chum?' And in the words Kling half recognized something forgotten and long-lost, and some corresponding thing in him which had died long ago almost revived itself; but the stone was too heavy for that resurrection, and he could not know that what he wanted to do was to smile.

'So long, then, if you're stopping here,' Williams said. He pulled a packet of Weights out of his pocket and put a cigarette on the bed beside Kling's hand, which did not move. 'Don't let that bastard of a doctor put anything over you,' Kling heard Williams, walking towards the door, call back to him as he went.

Kling did not smoke the cigarette, or pick it up even; but after a time rose, and with those stiff motions which seemed to be rehearsing some exercise not well remembered, washed dressed himself in shirt and blue trousers, combed his thick hair



and went along corridors to the door upon which was fastened the doctor's name.

There was a bench outside the door, and he sat down on it, waiting. The passage was dark because the windows had been coated with black paint for the blackout. Nothing moved in the long, dark, silent passage at the end of which Kling sat alone on the bench. He sat there bending forward, his hands clasped between his knees, his red tie dangling, his eyes fixed on the ground. He did not wonder what would happen behind the door. He waited, without speculation or awareness of waiting. It was all the same to him, outside or here or in the ward, he did not notice, it made no difference to his waiting.

A nurse opened the door and called him and he got up and stepped forward, and, looking past her along the wall of the corridor, thought: How many stones there are in this place; so many faces and stones: and lost the thought before it meant anything, and went into the room.

'I want you to lie on the couch,' Dr. Pope told him. 'We're going to give you a shot of something that will make you feel a bit sleepy. Quite a pleasant feeling. It won't hurt at all.'

Obedient, null, with that unnatural stiffness, Kling laid himself down.

Lying on the high couch he looked at the exuberant ceiling without surprise. The flowers and the crowding cherubic faces did not seem any more strange to him than anything else. The ceiling did not concern him any more than the doctor concerned him. Nothing concerned him except the heaviness in his breast. He waited, looking at the doctor as if he had never seen him before, the nurse busy with swab and spirit and tourniquet, and he felt far off on his arm the tourniquet tightening, the bursting pressure of flesh against tightening fabric, and then the small sharp sting as the needle entered the vein.

'Just try to relax,' the doctor said, watching, while the fluid in the hypodermic went down, the blank waiting face with wide-open extremely dilated eyes.

He smiled his professional smile of encouragement, and looked from the face at the chest and the massive shoulders bulked rigid under the white shirt that they stretched tight, at the clenched strong hands, the rough blue cloth strained on the tensed thighs, the stiffly upthrust boots not neatly laced, and back to the blank

face again. He noticed on the face how the deep tan of the outdoor years was starting to turn yellowish as it slowly faded inside hospital walls.

'Well, how do you feel now?' he asked, smiling, the man who stared up at him without answering.

'I want you to talk, Kling,' he said. 'I want you to tell me what's worrying you.'

Kling, his patient, looked away from him and up at the ceiling.

'What is it you've got on your mind?' asked the doctor.

Kling stared upwards without speaking and now his limbs started twitching a little.

'You'll feel better after you've talked,' Dr. Pope said.

The nurse finished the long injection and withdrew the syringe adroitly. A single drop of blood oozed from the pierced vein and she dabbed a shred of cotton wool on to it and silently carried her paraphernalia into the background and stood watching.

'You've got to tell me what's making you miserable,' the doctor said, speaking loud. He bent down and put his hand on Kling's shoulder and said loudly and very distinctly, close to his ear, 'You are very miserable, aren't you?'

Kling looked at him with his wide, black, lost animal's eyes and felt the hand on his shoulder. His shoulder twitched and something inside him seemed to be loosening, he felt sick in his stomach, and a sleepy strangeness was coming up at him out of nowhere, turning him tired, or sick.

'Why are you miserable?' he heard the question. 'Something happened to you, didn't it? Something you can't forget. What was that thing?'

Kling saw the doctor standing far too close, bending down almost on top of him. The hand that had hold of his shoulder gripped hard like a trap, the distorted face looked monstrous, foreshortened and suspended beneath painted faces, the eyes glaring, the threat of the mouth opening and shutting. Kling groaned, turning his head from one side to the other to escape from the eyes, but the eyes would not let him go. He felt the strangeness of sleep or sickness or death moving up on him, and then something gave way in his chest, the stone shifted, and sleep came forward to the foot of the couch, and he groaned again, louder, clutching his chest, crumpling the shirt and the red tie over his breastbone.

'Was it something bad that was done to you?' he heard the doctor's voice shout in his ear.

He felt himself turning and twisting on the hard bed, twisting away from the eyes and the voice and the gripping hand that was shaking him now. He shut his eyes to escape, but a salt prick of tears or sweat forced them open, he did not know where he was or what was happening to him, and he was afraid. He was very frightened with the strange sleep so near him, he wanted to call for help, it was hard for him to keep silent. But somewhere in the midst of fear existed the thought, They've taken everything; let them not take my silence. And the queer thing was that Williams was somehow a part of this, his smile, the cigarette, and what he had spoken.

'Was it something bad that *you* did?' Kling heard.

He did not feel the hand that was shaking his shoulder. He only felt his face wet, and on the other side of sleep a voice kept on moaning while another voice shouted. But he could not listen because, just then, the stone moved quite away from his breast and sleep came up and laid its languid head on his breast in place of the stone.

He tried to look at the strange sleep, to know it, but it had no form, it simply rested sluggishly on him, like gas, and all he could see above was a cloud of faces, the entire earth was no graveyard great enough for so many, nor was there room to remember a smile or a cigarette or a voice any more.

The old man was there and had been for some time, not sprawled in leaves now but standing, bent forward, listening; and Kling knew that this time something must pass between them, there was something which must be said by him, in extenuation, or in entreaty, to which the old man must reply: though what it was that had to be said, or what words would be found to express it, did not appear yet.

The old man bent over him and blood dripped on to his face and he could not move because of what lay on his breast, and when the old man saw he could not move he bent lower still and Kling could see the tufts of bristly hairs in his father's nostrils. He knew he would have to speak soon, and, staring wildly, with the old man's face almost on his, he could see the side of the face that was only a bloodied hole and he heard a sudden frantic gasp and gush of words in his own language, and that



was all he heard because at that moment sleep reached up and covered over his face.

Dr. Pope and the nurse had both seen that Kling was going to start talking. The doctor had seen it coming for about half a minute and waited intently. The nurse looked expectant. When the first sounds came both of them had moved forward at once and the doctor had bent lower over his patient, but now they stepped back from the couch.

'I was afraid that might happen,' Dr. Pope said in his irritable voice. 'Damned annoying. I suppose there's no one in the place who could translate?'

'I'm afraid not,' the nurse said.

'Exasperating,' the doctor said. 'So we can't get anything out of him after all.'

'I'm afraid not,' the nurse said again.

'Most frustrating and disappointing,' said Dr. Pope. 'Oh, well, it's no good trying to work on him now.'

## HERBERT READ

# ART AND CRISIS

A SHORT time ago I was invited to give a lecture in Dublin, but owing to certain circumstances connected with the war, that lecture was never delivered. What follows is the general substance of this address, and the reader is asked to excuse any remaining evidences of its occasional origin.

My first intention had been to re-tell a story I have often told before—to tell it in different words and perhaps with a shift of emphasis, but still the old story of the modern movement in art; from its first origins in the romantic movement at the beginning of the last century, through impressionism, post-impressionism, cubism, expressionism and the rest, down to the latest phases of surrealism and constructivism. I would have presented my

audience with a dozen labels or more, and an equal number of neat definitions. I might have gone on to show how, in spite of their modernity, such labels and prescriptions can be attached to various types of art in the past, and that there is in fact very little new under our contemporary sun. That might have reassured the conservative elements in my audience, and at the same time flattered those artists who might thus find their wildest experiments justified by historical precedents. I would have pointed out that though the history of art is rich in forms, or diverse in modes of expression, a claim to anything in the nature of originality is to be suspected merely on grounds of genetic improbability. Millennia divide the earliest cave-drawings from the paintings shown in an exhibition today, but they represent but a brief span in the history of the human race; and they represent no change at all in the æsthetic quality of man's plastic vision. Mankind has evolved nothing subtler than the co-ordination of hand and eye which we find in the well-known cave paintings of Altamira, but this faculty is strictly comparable with the co-ordination we find today in a drawing by Picasso. Æsthetic sensibility has remained constant: what have changed, of course, are the habits and beliefs of the societies into which artists are born.

These habits and beliefs are a necessary part of human existence, and a recognition of the fact that they obscure, like so many shifting clouds, the clarity of man's plastic vision, does not justify what we might call 'æsthetic independence', or 'art for art's sake'. Personally I would like to be a purist in art, just as I would like to be an individualist in ethics or an idealist in philosophy; but common sense compels me to a relativist or pragmatist attitude in all these matters. In art I am frankly a pluralist. Somewhere in the complex strand of human development there is a pure strain of æsthetic sensibility; perhaps, under laboratory conditions, it can be isolated. But usually it is intertwined with other threads, of magic, religion, science or politics; and according to the number and twist of these threads, the æsthetic sense is distorted and transfigured. But that is only half the relativist position. So far I have had in mind the objective aspects of art. But actually, as we know, the plastic vision passes through lenses of very different shapes. Every work of art is the expression of a personality or particular temperament, and though we can classify human beings with some degree of precision, and classify the modes of expression

which correspond to the various types, we do not abolish the general picture of plurality and relativity. There are romantic artists in every classical epoch and classical artists in every romantic epoch. There were surrealists in ancient Greece and constructivists in ancient Rome. There were impressionists in Egypt and expressionists in the medieval monasteries. No doubt an artist qualified in every respect to become a Royal Academician could be found among the pygmies of Central Africa.

Relativism does not necessarily imply an absence of judgement. It can, of course, be maintained that all values, whether moral or æsthetic, are as relative as the experiences we call art, and in a sense this is true. The æsthetic canons of Puritanism or Iconoclasm have little relevance to the facts of art, in so far as these facts are an expression of the diversity of human creatures. Like Fascism today, those religious movements were attempts to dragoon art—to control it from a centre and to impose uniformity on it. I personally take the view, which is heterodox to most people, that the more consciously moral or political values are imposed on art, the more art suffers. Art is spontaneous, the unpremeditated act of an individual, but always innocent. Where, then, does it find its scale of values? On what basis can we judge all the heterogeneous manifestations of art if not by social or ethical standards? Where, if not in a moral code, shall we find a criterion of art?

The answer is, of course, *in nature*. There, absolute and universal, is a touchstone for all human artifacts. And we must understand by nature, not any vague pantheistic spirit, but the measurements and physical behaviour of matter in any process of growth or transformation. The seed that becomes a flowering plant, the metal that crystallizes as it cools and contracts, all such processes exhibit laws, which are modes of material behaviour. There is no growth which is not accompanied by its characteristic form, and I think we are so constituted—are so much in sympathy with natural processes—that we always find such forms beautiful. The artist in particular, I would say, is a man who is gifted with the most direct perception of natural form. It is not necessarily a conscious perception: he may unconsciously reveal his perceptions in his works of art. Artists are to a considerable degree automata—that is to say, they unwittingly transmit in their works a sense of scale, proportion, symmetry, balance and other



abstract qualities which they have acquired through their purely visual and therefore physical response to their natural environment.

But such a criterion is too normal and commonplace to be of much use in any comparative valuation of works of art. The more we insist that art should conform to the universal principles of the natural order, the more necessary it becomes to find other traits or characteristics to distinguish between one work of art and another. Let us admit that the work of art should conform to the so-called laws of nature: we have then only stated a *sine qua non*, a basis which, if that were all, would reduce all works of art to a monotonous uniformity. That is, of course, what really happens in those official academies where the teaching is based on the immutable canons of classical art. Hellenic art in its mature period did attain, as nearly as any school of art ever has done, an exact correspondence to the physical laws of the universe. But it was a *reductio ad ratiocinativum*, or whatever is the opposite to a *reductio ad absurdum*. The art lost its savour, its sensitiveness: it became a thumb-ruled copy of nature, and so-called classical art ever since has been a thumb-ruled copy of the antique.

The *vitality* of art lies elsewhere, and that elsewhere can only be, so far as I can see, in two possible places. It can lie in the cultural pattern of which the work of art is one detail—the whole, as it were, transmitting its vitality to the part; or it can be a quality of the individual artist, an expression of what we call his personality.

Here is, I think, a very important problem with direct bearings on the cultural crisis of our time. Let me plunge straight into my argument, and state the dilemma in its most acute terms.

We are all agreed, I assume, that our civilization is in a state of crisis. The system of *laissez-faire* capitalism, which has been the unconscious economic basis of our civilization since the end of the Middle Ages, has broken down, and various alternatives seem to present themselves. These take two general forms—either a continuance of capitalism with a planned control of its objectives, or the replacement of capitalist enterprise by some form of communal ownership of the means of production and distribution. It is not necessary, perhaps, to detail all the possibilities, but they are more various than some of our politicians assume, and the cultural patterns which would emerge from

such diverse economic structures as, for example, the international cartelization of industry and the autarchic State control of industry would be totally different.

The question artists must therefore ask themselves is whether, recognizing the transitional nature of our period, they should wait for a cultural pattern to be determined by economic factors, and then more or less consciously conform to it; or whether they should adopt the only alternative policy and be content to make their art an expression of their separate and unique personalities.

Where, as in Russia, we already have a predetermined economic system and a cultural pattern corresponding to it, we find that the artist has very little choice in the matter. That particular cultural pattern excludes the individual solution and deliberately condemns all forms of expression which do not conform to the normal pattern. The individualist, in the U.S.S.R., is a pariah.

The first instinct of those who feel a little differently about the matter is to appeal to history. I am not sure that this is a logical course of action. We could undoubtedly find epochs of civilization in the past which had exercised a fairly strict control on the forms of cultural expression. The Arabic civilization is the most effective example. But the civilizations of the future will not necessarily correspond in their nature or mode of operation to the Arabic civilization, or to any model from the past. Indeed, I think it is more scientific to assume that they will be radically different. The present and future mechanisms of inter-communication and broadcasting in themselves sufficiently justify such an assumption, but the basic difference will be found in the mass productiveness of machine industry. For these reasons, if for no others, I think we must dismiss the appeal to history. History offers no solace to the individualist. It has been one long and unrelenting struggle for power, and power which, whether held by Church or State, by oligarchy or tyrant, has never tolerated the free expression of individuality. Liberty, unfortunately, is not a means to any form of political hegemony, and as Lord Acton said in this connection, 'a generous spirit prefers that his country should be poor, and weak, and of no account, but free, rather than powerful, prosperous and enslaved. It is better to be the citizen of a humble commonwealth in the Alps than a subject of the superb autocracy that overshadows half of Asia and Europe.'

We need not, however, accept the pessimistic view that history has already exhausted all forms of social organization without achieving the liberty essential to the individual and above all to the artist. There are, for example, certain forms of federalism which have been projected but never tried. There is just a chance that some of these may be tried during the next phase of history. If, as General Smuts implied in his much-discussed speech of 25 November last, we are to anticipate a world organized under three great power groups, then it occurs to me that there is a possibility that the holders of power within these three groups will be so preoccupied with economic and military affairs that they will make no attempt to control cultural affairs. Culture, no less than politics, has suffered from its liaison with the principle of national sovereignty. When nation competes against nation, national culture becomes a weapon of propaganda, a thing to hurl at your enemy or to bait a potential ally. The artist, along with the scientist and engineer, is conscripted. But if the world organization of power is to be given a wholly economic structure, then national cultures drop out of the picture, the artist is demobilized. It is a possibility which we can anticipate with some confidence. When General Smuts says that this trinity of power 'will be the stabilizing factor, the wall of power behind which the freedoms and democracies can be built up again', we can, if we agree with him, argue that behind the same protecting wall the arts and literatures of the world will revive.

We therefore return to that point of view which finds the secret of the vitality of art in the psychology of the artist. If we could show that what we mean by a work of art is always and inevitably the product of the individual personality, and of that personality operating, naturally not in social vacuum, but in maximum conditions of personal freedom, then we should have established the irrelevance of all those cultural patterns which attract or menace us from the future.

The psychology of personality has recently been explored in great scientific detail by Professor Gordon Allport of Harvard University. In his Preface to his book on *Personality* he makes the following summary statement of the point of view I shall adopt, and subsequently brings forward ample evidence to support it. 'I do not deny,' he says, 'that personality is fashioned to a large extent through the impact of culture upon the individual. But



the interest of psychology is not in the factors *shaping* personality, rather in personality *itself* as a developing structure. From this point of view culture is relevant only when it has become *interiorized* within the person as a set of personal ideals, attitudes, and traits. Likewise, culture conflict must become *inner* conflict before it can have any significance for personality. Why is it that in our times, when Western culture is sadly disorganized, our own personalities are not correspondingly disorganized? The enthusiastic determinist might reply: They are. Our institutional anchors are lost and each of us is either drifting or breaking to pieces. But such a reply would be wholly unrealistic. Are personalities in fact any more disorganized now than formerly? Is there any sure evidence for an increase of insanity? It is doubtful. Certainly, it is impossible to hold that disorganization of personality today is *proportional* to the rapid shattering of cultural forms. Cultural determinism is one of the monosymptomatic approaches: it has a blind spot for the internal balancing factors and structural tenacity within personality.<sup>1</sup>

If this is true, then not only is it nonsensical to assume, for example, that the modern art movement, as an expression of a decadent civilization, is already doomed, but equally that movement has nothing to fear from whatever pattern of culture is imposed on us in the immediate future. That, at any rate, is the thesis I want to maintain. Art, in the tangible form of living and creative artists, is not the by-product of a culture; rather, a culture is the end-product of the outstanding personalities of a number of artists. It is perfectly possible, as we know, to have a civilization without artists—ancient Sparta is an example, and modern Germany promised to be another. And even where a civilization, in the course of its development, coincides with the appearance of a number of artists, it has always been difficult to correlate the values of art with the values of the civilization. It is true that the greatest phase of English poetry coincides with the Elizabethan age, a period of national expansion, and another great phase of English poetry coincides with the Victorian age. But if there is some causal connection between these civilizations and their poetry, Victorian poetry ought to be infinitely greater than Elizabethan poetry, to maintain some correspondence with the infinitely greater extent and power of the British Empire in the

<sup>1</sup> *Personality*. New York (1937), pp. viii-ix

later period. And that is manifestly not the case. Naturally there must be minimum conditions of civilization for any kind of culture to exist, but those whom we recognize as great artists appear with complete irrelevance to the character and scope of any particular civilization. The greatest dramatist of the nineteenth century appeared in the poor and remote kingdom of Norway; Spain, the most backward of European civilizations today, has produced our greatest painters. Even in a public art like architecture, I defy anyone to find an exact correspondence between the greatness of a building and the greatness of a civilization. The great medieval cathedrals may not be the expression of particular personalities in the same sense that a painting by Titian or El Greco is an expression of their particular personalities, but in the material sense the civilization which saw the building of these cathedrals was a mean one. That leads straight to the suggestion that the determining factor, in architecture and therefore in other arts, is a spiritual one. But a moment's reflection will show that this generalization, too, is wholly untenable. What specific spiritual force gave rise to the painting of Delacroix or Cézanne, or for that matter, to the poetry of Shakespeare or Goethe? The evidence from music is even more striking. The great masters, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Berlioz, Sibelius, are completely detached from the main cultural streams of their times. The most we can admit is that 'passion is the mother of great things' (Burckhardt), and that in periods of crisis, which by no means coincide with periods of greatness, unsuspected forces awaken in individuals. It is not that the individuals 'express' the crisis; rather their highest faculties are called into being to overcome the crisis by the creation of new values, which are the expression of a personal vision.

If next we look at the positive evidence for the thesis that art is an expression of the uniqueness of a personality, it is overwhelmingly convincing. I am prepared to make, here as always, distinction between public and private art, and to exclude, with considerable reserves, the whole art of architecture. The truth is, that up to the Renaissance we know very little about the circumstances of building: the more evidence we dig out of the archives, the more insistently personalities emerge. Since the Renaissance the personality of the architect is stamped on every building of any artistic value, until we come to the functional architecture

of our own time. (Even in this impersonal sphere, it is the great personalities of the movement, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, who are the dominant influences.) I do not wish to reduce all public art to private art. There are many great monuments, from the Pyramids in Egypt to the Rockefeller Centre in New York, which have nothing private about them. What I would rather say is, that the history of art simply does not make sense unless this distinction is borne in mind. The difference between the Sphinx and the famous head of Nefertiti is not merely a difference of degree, but also of kind. Certain works of art are as it were constructed by anonymous forces to express the might or majesty of a god or a king, or to fulfil the civic functions of a group of people. These monuments are classified as works of art, and I do not wish to dethrone them. But constructed as they are in cold blood, with calculated measurements and estimated costs, what can they have in common with that still, small voice which issues from the innermost being of a poet or a painter in the intimacy of his own room, with the delicate accompaniments of silence and concentration out of which alone inspiration can be seized? The best gift a tyrant can offer a great artist is a prison, for there at least some of the essential conditions of artistic creation are possible. But though great works of art have been written in prison, because the mind of the prisoner remained free, liberty is nevertheless a privilege which promotes that energy of thought, fulness of interest and active curiosity which are necessary for the realization of an individual's integrity. We have only to consider for a moment the psychology of the artist in the process of his creative activity to make this quite clear.

It is difficult to select a representative case. If my thesis is correct, the personality of every great artist is unique, and we cannot therefore usefully analyse a *typical* artist. We may say with evident truth that every artist must possess a vivid, sensuous organization, quick perceptiveness and ready muscular co-ordination; we can assume, as I have already pointed out, that from this physical disposition he acquires a special sense of form and harmony. None of these qualities has any relation to the form or content of the culture of his time. They are more likely to be due to differences in the germ cells with which the artist is born, or to be products of a specific endocrine constitution. They can be influenced by drugs such as benzedrine. But all this only



amounts to saying that each man must have an aptitude for the task he undertakes. And in this sense there is no clear division between one type of man and another. The physical gradations of human beings are infinitely refined, and it is only at the extremes of the scale that one man may inevitably be destined to become an artist and another man as inevitably destined to become a dustman.

Many artists have left us revealing accounts of the creative process—poets like Keats and Coleridge, novelists like Flaubert and Henry James, painters like Von Gogh and Pissarro. Much analysis of works of art has been done by critics. In the end the specific quality which is isolated may, from a creative or dynamic aspect, be called *inspiration*: but objectively considered it is the precipitation of a certain *style*, and that style is peculiar to the individual artist. Style may include borrowed elements, but the value of a work is strictly proportionate to what we call the *purity* of its style, and by this purity we mean its irreducible element of personal grace or idiosyncrasy. 'The style of Titian' implies one thing, and 'in the style of Titian' quite another. But the difference, to which historians of art devote the most exacting scientific analysis and the most intuitive perceptiveness, always resolves into something as personal to Titian as the timbre of his voice or the wrinkles on his brow. The style is the man himself, and although this aphorism of Buffon's has often been misapplied, it remains the basic fact about all forms of expressive communication.

I am pulled up by the word 'communication', for there, according to some philosophers, the whole difficulty lies. Communication only takes place effectively within an agreed field of reference, in other words, within a cultural pattern to which the artist conforms. This may be the pattern set by an élite, or aristocracy, and then the patron makes the rules which the artist follows. Gainsborough, for example, paints portraits of his patrons instead of landscapes for his own pleasure, and paints them according to a conventional style. But the more recent theory which Tolstoy put forward in *What is Art?* and which has been given a more scientific or dialectical form by Marxist critics, insists that the artist should express himself in a style which is easily understood by the people. This may be a style of Biblical simplicity, fit for peasants, which is what Tolstoy thought

desirable, or may be a style of so-called socialist realism, which is current journalese spiced with political and scientific jargon. In any such case, the artist is being asked to depersonalize his style, to write in a basic language, paint in basic images, compose in basic melodies. That way can only lead to the impoverishment of art, and really implies a sovereign contempt for the intelligence of the people. I would go to the opposite extreme, and maintain that every man's style, in the degree that it faithfully represents his personality, communicates its essential message. Just as normally we experience no difficulty in judging the value of a man's personality by his gait and expressive gestures, so we as easily accept and judge the value of an artist's style of expression. The trouble is, that people no longer judge an artist by his style: they judge him by almost everything else—by his political or religious message, his social standing, his fame or the company he keeps. If he belongs to a movement, there will be a tendency to accept or reject his style as an integral part of that movement. Art movements in general, we may conclude, are legitimate in so far as they take the form of co-operative societies to aid in the free inter-communication of the personal styles of their members: illegitimate in so far as they impose on their members a common or doctrinaire conception of style.

Style, therefore, is effective in so far as it is free, and rather than attempt to evolve a common and easily digestible style, we should inquire into those forces which tend to inhibit the free expression of personality. We do not have to look far. In one direction we find an educational organization whose whole purpose is to teach the individual his manners, that is to say, his style, and in another direction we find the pervasive and anonymous pressure of the social or cultural pattern which has the same inhibitive effect on the individual personality. Whether that effect is conscious or unconscious, whether the drive to self-expression is sublimated or entirely repressed—these are psychological sequels we need not pursue at the present moment. I would like, however, to deal briefly with the educational aspect of the problem, and to consider what measures we might take to develop within the existing social pattern a more positive and creative atmosphere.

I have lately devoted a whole book to this problem, and the reader must excuse me if, in this brief reference to a big question,

I make assumptions for which I have elsewhere offered the proofs. My general contention is, that a system of education which aims at the creation of uniform standards of intelligence and, more indirectly, at the creation of a uniform pattern of culture, only ends by producing a widespread neurosis within the structure of society. The system of education, as it has developed in Europe during the course of the last hundred years and more, has concentrated exclusively on the cultivation of logical habits of thought and the orderly acquisition of facts. Memory rather than imagination has been its ideal, and its tendency has been to insist on an ethical concept of character rather than a balance or integration of the individual personality. Children have been treated as so much plastic material which could be moulded into static forms, instead of as extremely active centres of dynamic forces whose gears easily get jammed.

I must not devote any space to the negative side of the picture, but there is no doubt that a devastating indictment of conventional methods of education can be drawn up. The danger which then ensues is that the bad old method is discarded, and no new method is put in its place. Freedom from the past tyranny may be achieved, but no alternative concept of discipline is established. If the children of the past have become neurotic adults because of the systematic repression and frustration practised on them by their parents and teachers, the children of the future are threatened by an equally bad neurosis because they have not been initiated into any principle of growth or integration.

The point of view which I put forward, as against the whole grammatical and logical tradition of education, is the Platonic doctrine which finds in the practice of art those regulative principles in virtue of which the integration of the personality can be achieved. Art is a *natural* discipline. Its rules are the proportions and rhythms inherent in our universe, and the instinctive observation of these rules, which come about in the creative industry of the arts, brings the individual without effort into sympathetic harmony with his environment. That is what we mean by the integration of the personality—the acquiring of those elements of grace and skill which make the individual apt in self-expression, honest in communication, and sympathetic in the reciprocal relationships upon which society is based. Art, we might say, can make us completely human.



I must not let it be assumed, however, that art is a subject to be confined to the schools. We are gradually, I hope, getting rid of the fallacy that the process of education can be combined within special institutions. Education is the continuous process of the adjustment of the individual to his environment, and if an individual ever claims to be completely educated, it merely indicates that he is in need of a change of scene. But a man who had retained the innocent eye of childhood would never make such a claim. To his ever fresh sensibility the world is re-born every day. 'Your enjoyment of the world is never right', as Trahearne wrote, 'till every morning you awake in Heaven; see yourself in your Father's Palace; and look upon the skies, the earth, and the air as Celestial Joys: having such a reverend esteem of all, as if you were among the Angels. . . . You never enjoy the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you.' And in another place he gives us this aphorism, which contains all the truth I have been trying to express: 'It is of the nobility of man's soul that he is insatiable'.

This insatiability is only retained in the 'Estate of Innocence'. We are all born with a 'primitive and innocent clarity', which is then eclipsed by the customs and manners of men, and by the evil influence of bad education. If we are to retain that primitive and innocent clarity, it must have our sympathy and encouragement long before school days and long after them. Our education begins in infancy, in the first tender relationship of mother and child; and we do not rightly encourage the values I have been speaking about unless we provide in the first and most primitive of our social groups, in the family, that respect for personality which is the foundation of liberty, and the only air or ambience in which the personality can develop itself. The family should merge imperceptibly into the school, and then in the schools we must allow for the spontaneous emergence of groups, living and growing cells with a nucleus in some creative activity, each a field of adventure in which the grace and discipline of the individual can develop as naturally as the form and colour of a flower. This is not idealism, this is not the impracticable vision of a poet; it is biology, the basic science of life. I am speaking of facts.

without which our communal life cannot survive, without which all that we mean by greatness of soul, magnanimity, nobility, will die in the level deserts of a mechanized world.

The relevancy of what I have been saying to the present crisis may now begin to emerge. There still exist in the world a few small nations which have stood out against the mass neurosis of our time—that mad obsession for power and wealth which is bringing destruction to our civilization. If such nations can preserve their independent identity, then it is a situation which has great possibilities for art. I am afraid of the internationalizing tendencies of our age—of anonymous powers which would obliterate frontiers, expedite communications, standardize living. I am in favour of all that makes for diversity, variety, the reciprocity of individual units. There is a sense in which freedom implies isolation and inertia. But the real freedom is a freedom to act, to create, to move in reciprocal orbits with other free units. It is that dynamic freedom which we must seek for art, and I think we shall find it only in communities of a comfortable size, where intimacy is possible and a personality can have free scope and a friendly audience. I am not saying that a personality cannot find freedom to express itself within a vast centralized State which has the power and riches of a fifth, a fourth or one-half of the globe at its command. One might even argue that in this respect, too, there is safety in numbers. What I am saying is that a free personality, a noble soul, is independent of powers and potentates, as of all the evil and destruction they let loose in the world. But do not let us confuse spiritual freedom and personal freedom. A man may indeed possess his soul in patience, but many a noble soul has lost patience and perished miserably in a concentration camp. All that the artist demands, as a minimum, is to be let alone. He does not ask for happiness, which he knows is the rarest of the gifts of fortune. He knows, with Burckhardt, that ‘only in movement, with all its pain, can life live’. But movement implies freedom, not restriction; progress rather than stability; the *relatedness* of a fraternity and the voluntary moderation of a society limited in extent, mild in power, never infringing the liberty of the person. But if power grows and liberty declines, if chaos spreads over the greater part of the world, as it does today, then even out of that darkness the individual can speak in his still calm voice. And the substance of his message? From the

mouth of the philosopher we call it truth, from the artist, beauty, but the poet Shelley called it love, that

‘... from its awful throne of patient power  
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour  
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,  
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs  
And folds over the world its healing wings’.

ALEXANDER HENDERSON

## WHERE SHALL JOHN GO?

### IV—TURKEY

MY DEAR JOHN,

So you think of going to Turkey and want my information and advice? You say that as I have been there since 1940 I ‘ought to know something about it’. Well, personally, I often wonder whether I know anything about Turkey or the Turks. I am quite sure that even if I lived there for twenty years I should still know less than I can learn about any European country in six months. There is something fundamentally impenetrable about the Turkish nation which leaves one with the dissatisfied feeling of being in the presence of secrets for ever beyond our power to uncover. However I won’t go into that now. I had better avoid the temptation of philosophical discussion and at once attack the practical.

When you say ‘going to Turkey’ you mean in fact to Istanbul or Ankara. Cherish no illusions about romantic journeys to the places that look so fascinating on the map, places like Lake Van, or Erzerum or Kars, or almost anywhere else in eastern Anatolia, for you will never get there. Foreigners, even those as intelligent and charming as yourself, are just not allowed to visit the greater part of Turkey. After all, even though you are intelligent, you might be a spy. On the other hand you could visit Izmir—though since you are not interested in either the tobacco or the dried fruits trade, I can see no reason why you should—and you might go to Bursa. This is a charming little town in a valley of orchards,



poplar trees and olive groves at the foot of Bithynian Olympus (in Turkish, *Uludagh*). Indeed, if you want to settle down for a couple of years to learn Turkish—a surprisingly difficult language—and get as close as any foreigner can to the obscure springs of the Turkish way of life, you could not do better than choose Bursa. I doubt, however, whether that is your purpose, and therefore merely propose that you spend a week as a tourist at this one-time capital of the Ottoman Empire. You will be able to join the comforts of a modern European hotel to the æsthetic pleasure of contemplating the sumptuous fifteenth-century faïences of the Green Mosque—to my eye this ought to be called the Blue Mosque, but green as you know has the prestige of being the colour of the Prophet. Moreover, in the hot, feruginous waters, domed in marble, of the hotel bath, you will be able to eradicate your rheumatism which you tell me is getting worse, and which you will certainly aggravate during your first weeks in Turkey by drinking too much vodka. Do not say, how do I know you will drink too much vodka. You will. For some inexplicable reason every British and American newcomer to Turkey is at once bewitched and captivated by the local vodka. He may have been accustomed to the finest Scotch or Bourbon, to the subtlest of gins—all this makes no difference. He will immediately declare that never has he found a better drink than Turkish vodka. Only after weeks or even months does he suddenly one day realize that a good methylated spirit would have had the same effect at less cost. For by that time his rheumatism, his liver, his gall-stones, his stomach or his kidneys, whichever is his weakness, clamour for attention. Fortunately Turkey, which supplied the vodka, provides also the antidote. Mineral waters are the thing, taken inside or out. Turkey is the only country I know where you can treat a man to a water. A great comfort in an otherwise ruinously expensive land. You can get away with several rounds of water for the price of one vodka.

Let me suggest that you give thought to this interesting question of water. As one travels eastward from Europe, Turkey is the point at which one first realizes that water has a price. In Istanbul you enter the countries of the water standard; you are on the fringe of those vast territories stretching across Asia in which water is a precious thing, not to be lightly taken for granted. The far-off deserts of Arabia announce their drought in the cities of

Anatolia. And in Istanbul you do not drink water out of the tap. It may be pure; it may contain typhoid. In any case the water brought to your flat weekly in vast, wicker-covered demijohns has a much more pleasant taste. In time, as your palate grows more experienced you will be able to distinguish between one spring and another: you will appreciate that there are, as it were, *grands crus* in water no less than in wine. Above all, when you have eaten real Turkish food you will agree that no other liquor goes with it so well as a good water.

Let me assume then that you will go to Bursa as a tourist and for the good of your rheumatism, but that you will settle in either Istanbul or Ankara. You need not hesitate about which to choose. For you life in Istanbul will be far more agreeable than in the capital. Some of your Turkish friends will disapprove of this choice. They will say that Istanbul is not Turkey—just as many of your American friends will declare with the self-importance of one who has made a discovery of revolutionary import, that New York is not America. In fact Istanbul contains within its bounds samples of everything that Turkey has to show, old or new, animate or inanimate. Do not, therefore, allow yourself to be misled. You will be fortified in your purpose by discovering that these same advocates of Ankara either seldom visit the capital themselves, or, if they have the misfortune to be obliged to live there, take every opportunity of a week-end by the Bosphorus and Marmara.

Getting to Istanbul is no light matter at the present time. In the old days you could nip across Europe by the Orient Express, or you could arrive very pleasantly from Athens in the 'Bessarabia' or the 'Transylvania', the twin Rumanian luxury boats which for the past three years have swung uselessly at anchor in the Bosphorus. Now you must go by way of Cairo. And you must travel from Adana (on the south-east coast of Turkey) across Anatolia in the Taurus Express. Do not let the name of this train lead you to expect rapid transport. You will be lucky if you are not more than five hours late at your destination. But there are compensations. From your compartment window you will see a good deal of central and eastern Anatolia: that is to say, in winter mile after mile of snow, and in summer, mile after mile of sun-baked earth: a khaki, buff, biscuit or umber landscape almost bare of trees and apparently devoid of roads or human habitation. If you are fascinated by the lonely and the desolate, this is the stuff.

If not, you can turn back to your *Reiselektüre* and start in on your course of vodka drinking. In time you will reach Ankara (accent on the first syllable even when spelt Angora). If you look out of your sleeper window you will note with surprise that the crowd on the platform consists principally of English, Americans, French, Germans, Poles, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Portuguese, Hungarians, Rumanians and other non-Turkish types. They will all be members of the diplomatic corps, with an occasional journalist, and their presence on Ankara station shows at once why I advise you to live in Istanbul. For it is boredom which has driven to the station these unfortunate inmates of the 'diplomatic concentration-camp' (as they plaintively term Ankara). To meet the Taurus Express or to linger on the last words of a parting traveller is one of their keenest pleasures. If then these diplomats, the most modest and unpretentious of beings, find life so wearisome in Ankara, how much more will it appal your lively and restless temperament. You should eventually visit Ankara, and I shall have something to say about it later, but for the moment let us hasten on to Istanbul where you are to settle.

Let me admit, naïvely if you like, that I am still impressed by the Istanbul skyline, by the long-distance view of the city. I think you will be impressed too. You will contemplate Istanbul for the first time from the crowded, uncomfortable steamer which carries you from Haydarpasha Station, terminus of the railway across Anatolia, past Leander's Tower to Galata Bridge, and you will recognize that before you is one of the finest backcloths ever painted, a backcloth for a ballet of hitherto undevised richness and subtlety. Here today, in crumbling tones of pearl, dove-grey, olive-green, buff and old rose, the walls and domes of the Saray, of Aya Sofia, of the great mosques, the oily, dirty, shimmering waters of the Golden Horn, the cypress trees of the Rose Palace Gardens glow and sing perpetually to themselves under a sky glittering with light or lavish with sumptuous clouds. From the deck of the steamer, from amidst the crowd of peasants, soldiers, shop-keepers, artisans, clerks and business-men, and distracted though you may well be by the smells of boots, garlic and dirty clothes, you will perceive that Byzantium still exists, that Istanbul is still The City.

'Very nice, no doubt,' you say, 'but how about actual living? How does one go about it and where does one look for a flat?'



Well, Istanbul consists of three main districts: Galata, Beyoglu and Istanbul. This use of one name for the city as a whole and for part of it—as though the City of London were called simply London like the whole agglomeration—may seem to you confusing. But to the natives it isn't. If, in the Istiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue) of Beyoglu you tell a taxi driver to take you to Istanbul he won't ask if you think you are being funny, but will very properly rattle you off to the other side of the Golden Horn. The district to which he will take you is the ancient Byzantium and contains almost every building or ruin of interest. It is Turkish, with scatterings of Armenian and Jewish, in population, higgledy-piggledy in layout, very dirty and extremely picturesque. You will not be surprised to learn that Pierre Loti found himself a lodging amidst the colourful squalor of this part of the city. But I do not recommend you to follow his example. Moreover, you will find that none of your Turkish friends live in old Istanbul. They have too much sense and rightly prefer the centrally-heated apartments of Machka, Nishantash, Ayas Pasha and other quarters of Europeanized Beyoglu. These then, you will conclude, are the districts where you should look for a flat. And you are right—in principle. What I doubt is whether your income can uphold the principle. Turkey was expensive even in peace time; now, prices are astronomic. A good many people in Turkey as in other countries have done well out of the war, and in consequence the cost of everything has steadily risen to its present level of between 300 and 400 per cent above that of 1939. Thus for a comfortably-furnished apartment big enough to accommodate a dinner party of six people, you will have to pay at least £65 a month. I would not recommend renting an unfurnished flat and buying furniture. You might get a small flat for £25 a month, but a capital outlay of several hundred pounds will be required to obtain the minimum of chairs, tables and beds, and what you get will be horrors of the worst hire-purchase type. Antique furniture is almost unobtainable except at infrequent auctions on the death of some rich merchant or one-time pasha.

Alternatively you could live in a hotel. There is only one which you would care for. Chiefly inhabited by Germans, it is popularly known as 'The Brown House'. If the presence of the enemy (and Turkey is, you will recall, a neutral country) does

not incommode you, you can live there modestly for £40 to £50 a month, without food. Finally, you might take a furnished room in a back street. This will cost you some £20 a month and will, for a person of your tastes, be a far from agreeable mode of living. But there it is. If you mean to go to Turkey, go well supplied with cash. For everything is correspondingly expensive. Your tea, for instance, will cost you about thirty shillings a pound. At present there are occasional spasmodic shortages of tea, coffee, rice, macaroni, etc., which are due either to incompetence in distribution or to some rapacious individual having cornered supplies in order to sell them on the black market. In general, however, there are plenty of good things to eat—the best lobsters in the world come out of the Bosphorus—and competent cooks, mostly Greeks, are to be had for the relatively low wage of £5 or £6 a month, plus room and food.

Prices may come down after the war, but it is most unlikely that Turkey will ever be a cheap country. If you still think that your income will suffice to preserve you from death by starvation, we can turn to less serious things such as the social and intellectual life of the country.

First of all never forget that Istanbul is still Byzantium. Get yourself organized for gossip, intrigue and the oblique approach. Realize that you will need to exercise the greatest cunning if you want your private life to remain private. In Istanbul you are living in a city where anyone higher in the social scale than a housemaid or a shop assistant is a public figure of the greatest interest to all the other public figures. Do not imagine, because you are in a city of a million population, that you can go to a cinema, a café or a night club without being seen by someone who either knows you or knows about you. Both categories will gossip endlessly about your appearance, your income, your friends, your mistress—they will invent one for you if you have none—your work, your politics and your ailments. The only difference between the two categories is that those who know you will gossip good naturedly—I hope—while those who merely know about you will use venom as a substitute for information. Kindly and humane though you are, you will make a number of enemies. Within a few months you will discover that in the eyes of various individuals whom you hardly know you figure as a monster of depravity: a certain X. with whom

you have once exchanged a brief remark goes around informing his pals that he has definite information that you are a dope addict and have been divorced three times, while Z., of course, knows for certain that you are sleeping with A.'s wife whom you have perhaps met a couple of times and can't stand at any price. At first you will be distressed by this malevolence. What have I done, you will ask yourself, to have excited all this ill-will? In almost every case the answer is that you have ignored X. and Z. For that reason they will never forgive you. It is precisely because you don't know them and apparently don't want to know them that they detest you. But you need not despair. The remedy is not to abandon your proper right to discrimination, is not to sink into a swamp of universal amiability: it is to take the offensive yourself. Crack back at your slanderers: if you have information use it, if not, invent some. In any case join in the game. Sooner or later you will have to; you will be thought dull and inept if you don't. That is, unless you intend to lead an eremitical existence. The reason is that in any mixed gathering—particularly at the interminable tea parties which Istanbul society adores—there is hardly anything to talk about except one's own and other people's private lives. You can naturally make an occasional reference to the political situation, but if it weren't for the war there wouldn't be any political situation. Turkey is one of those countries where hardly anything ever happens. And what does happen takes place in great secret in Ankara, and is little known elsewhere. If you yearn for political discussion in Istanbul, you must arrange to meet the few people who are well informed. High up on my list are the Turkish newspaper editors. I think you will find them interesting. They have, almost without exception, a refreshingly realistic, even cynical approach to politics. They know what they want and they know what we want. You don't need to beat about the bush in talking to them. And once they have accepted you they will say a good deal more than they are allowed to write in their papers.

If politics bores you and conversation about literature, painting or music is indispensable, you will find life difficult. The Turks on the whole are not an intellectually curious people: consequently the number of people practising the arts or interested in them is much smaller than in various other countries of similar size. And among those who are writers or interested in literature



you will not meet anyone well acquainted with English achievement. No one has heard of Yeats, Eliot, Auden or Spender; the names of Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf are vaguely known, through French translations, to perhaps half a dozen intellectuals. So far as I could discover, none of the works even of these novelists has yet been translated into Turkish. You will have more ground in common if you are well read in French literature. Verlaine, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Valéry, Cocteau, Gide, and lately Aragon, are the people who count for the few Turkish intellectuals there are. Istanbul fortunately possesses the best French bookshop in the Middle East, and if you are not already familiar with the works of those writers you will have no difficulty in obtaining them. You will in any case need to know French well—since I do not suppose you will ever sufficiently master Turkish for fluent conversation—if your circle of friends is not to be limited to the few English-speaking Turks.

In the face of this French influence it is disappointing to find that the only English writing which is known is that of the popular but aesthetically unimportant best-selling novelists. For the Turkish translations of their books there is a large demand. Turkish publishers affirm that the serious English novel of the past twenty years is difficult to translate and has no appeal to the public.

Of native work there is little to be said. Turkish novelists and short-story writers exist, but the educated public cares nothing for them. In nearly four years I only heard one Turkish novel widely discussed, and that was not on account of its literary merit but because all the characters were immediately recognizable Istanbul personalities—two of whom, indeed, brought libel actions against the author. The book was, in fact, typical Istanbul gossip of the kind I have warned you about.

In painting, too, the only important influence is French. You will probably meet some of the young men who are associated in what is called the 'D Group.' They have all worked in Paris, mostly with André Lhote, and their work, though highly derivative, is the only painting which shows any hope for the future. What may be called 'Academic' Turkish art is of no importance and is not even discussed by the younger men. The general public, however, regards the 'D Group' as a collection of lunatics and popular magazines poke fun at them for pictures

which are in fact merely gentle essays in the manner of Dufy or Utrillo, of Cézanne or Renoir.

It was one of the members of this group who made to me a remark which indicates very well the attitude of modern Turkey. He said: 'Do you know anything about American painters?' and when I asked why he wanted to know about them, replied: 'America is a new country like ours and their problems must be similar to ours.' And there you have the clue to what ultimately makes modern Turkey depressing for the Englishman. There is no feeling for the past: no sense of a tradition to be used and developed. For the young Turk of today Turkey was made yesterday by Kemal Ataturk. The Turks at the present time are a people who have cut themselves off from their own past. No doubt it was politically necessary to do this, but the cultural and philosophical results are already unfortunate.

This newness of Turkey reaches its most concentrated expression in Ankara which you should visit, both for its interest as a curiosity, and to still any doubts you might have about the superiority of Istanbul. Ankara is certainly one of the oddest cities in the world. In appearance an unfinished garden suburb spread out in the midst of a barren, lunar landscape, it is inhabited almost exclusively by politicians, civil servants, diplomats, and the shopkeepers, cooks, hairdressers, tailors, chauffeurs and so forth required to look after the bosses.

In Ankara you feel extraordinarily remote from reality. You feel as though you were leading a symbolic existence in a symbolic city—as though, let us say, you were an animated isosceles triangle perambulating a vast geometrical design. You may, if you are gifted that way, progress occasionally into three dimensions. But even so you will never feel comfortably corporeal. Your chief sensation will be that of having been impressed, willy-nilly, into the service of a recondite cult served by hundreds of isosceles triangles who are determined to reshape you after their own pattern. This cult to which the population of Ankara devotes its life, is oligarchic politics. Intrigue, which in Istanbul is predominantly amorous and financial, is here social and political. The struggle for advancement in Ministerial favour, the civil war of Department against Department, the pressures and counter-pressures of Ambassadors—all this fills the thoughts, the conversations, the dreams of Ankara's inhabitants. Those

bit-bits of scandal which were such a success at Istanbul tea-parties there evoke a yawn and a hurried switching back of the conversation to the vital question of whether the Minister for Providential Relations is going to resign or not.

You will rapidly discover that there is almost nothing to do in Ankara except work. Reduced to its essentials, the Turkish capital may be described as the unitary city—effectively it has only one street, one restaurant, one hotel and one night-club. If you have not got a job which will fill at least ten hours of the day, you will not be able to endure Ankara for a week. I expect that after a few days in this austere political lamasery you will return with a sigh of relief to the human weaknesses of Istanbul.

If you stay more than a year in Istanbul one of two things will happen: you will either grow more and more impatient with the whole place till at last you pack your trunks and depart, or you will become an addict of its subtle, narcotic charm and stay there for the rest of your life. In either case it is the same features of Istanbul which repel or fascinate: that lovely panorama which you first saw from the boat, and the noisy, dirty, dramatic alleyways, the fickle climate of perpetually veering winds, the gossip, the intrigue, the comfortable, easy-going, amoral way of life of the population, and above all what you may describe either as a soothing absence of mental tension or as a stultifying lack of intellectual stimulus.

This last characteristic of the city is its most dangerous one. If you can afford to go to Turkey—which for you will mean Istanbul—you will, I think, succumb to temptation and remain there. Before long you will have become as Byzantine as the rest of the population. Perhaps there are worse fates.

## SELECTED NOTICE

*Woman in Art.* By Dr. Helen Rosenau. (Isomorph. 5s.)

FROM the Venus of Willendorf to Barbara Hepworth's Single Form 1939 is a far cry. But the juxtaposition of a primitive fertility cult image and a work of art of a highly intellectual kind, as if they both belonged to the same category, is typical of the sort of confused thinking which, despite her undoubted



erudition, Dr. Helen Rosenau displays in her newly published work *Woman in Art*.

In the first place the title is misleading, since the book is not primarily concerned with artistic problems, and even when these are under discussion it is not made clear whether it is the portrayal of women or the execution of work by women that is thought to be significant. It is rather with sociological questions that Dr. Rosenau is preoccupied and there are, it seems, several angles from which these may be approached—if, indeed, it is necessary to approach them at all. But since it appears that it is, it seems a pity that, as Dr. Rosenau explains in the preface, the work has had to be published in an abridged form, as a fuller development of any one of her arguments might have led to a clarification instead of to a confusion of the issues involved. As it is, however, one is left with an impression that sexual distinctions are decisive to the extent that men and women are hardly of the same species and that the separation of human beings into two categories may in fact be made, viz. (i) men, (ii) women, children and idiots. At the best of times this assumption would have seemed unfortunate, but it is doubly so at the present time when women are being conscripted on an equal basis with men (except, of course, for inequalities of pay and for the unfairness of the 'sumptuary laws' as recently administered by the President of the Board of Trade) and expected to take an equal share of the national burdens.

In another way, however, Dr. Rosenau has collected together some very interesting material—all of which goes to prove that from an artistic point of view sexual distinctions are irrelevant, as may be seen, for example, in such an impressive head as that by Renée Sintenis. Also, in looking at the self portrait of Sophonisba Anguisciola one recalls the fact that Van Dyck said that he learnt more from his conversations with her when she was old and blind than from anyone else in Italy.

E. H. RAMSDEN

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir,

My essay on 'The Intelligentsia' in the March issue of *HORIZON* contained two errors of fact which I shall be glad to rectify.

- (1) Paul Levy was not excluded from the German Communist Party, but left it of his own accord. He committed suicide during an attack of delirious fever.
- (2) Erich Muehsam was found hanged in a lavatory at Oranienburg concentration camp. Evidence, however, points to the assumption that he had been, after a long period of torture, strangled by the S.S. Guards who faked the appearance of suicide.

Yours, etc.

ARTHUR KOESTLER



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